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Novice Principals' Views of Instructional Leadership and Organizational Improvement: Two Case Studies

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by

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ABSTRACT

Novice Principals' Views of Instructional Leadership and

Organizational Improvement: Two Case Studies

by

Elizabeth Downing Barnitz

Recently, researchers and policymakers have been calling on principal preparation programs to equip prospective leaders with education and training in effective instructional leadership practices as well as in school improvement strategies (Grossman, 2011; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; The Wallace Foundation, 2009). Kellar and Slayton's (2013) and Martinez-Kellar's (2012) review of the historical progression of school leadership studies identified a transition from a concern with leadership effects on schools (often examined through a quantitative framework) to a concern with the psychological and organizational dimensions of leading people in an organizational context. Martinez-Kellar's (2012) case study of two high school principals indicated that high leader self-efficacy interacted with mental models to foster conditions to promote organizational improvement. The purpose of the current study was to explore two new elementary principals' views of instructional leadership (including possible tensions between evaluation and supervision) as well as views of their roles to facilitate organizational improvement in low-performing schools. Principal interviews were semi-structured, and following the lead of earlier research (Kellar & Slayton, 2013), focused on the conditions/ability new principals believed were important for organizational improvement. Data collection also included two teacher interviews from each site, district and site documentation, and site walkthroughs with each principal. Case descriptions

were constructed examining the organizational setting and principal perspectives on instructional leadership and organizational improvement using the conceptual framework guiding the study.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

Recently, researchers and policymakers have been calling on principal preparation programs to equip prospective leaders with education and training in effective instructional leadership practices as well as school improvement (Grossman, 2011; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; The Wallace Foundation, 2009). Some observers suggest that effective leaders would spend the majority of their time focused on tasks tied to instructional leadership (Hattie, 2009, Levine, 2005). However, there is also evidence that principals spend substantial time on managerial tasks and "putting out fires" as opposed to on instructional practices (Oliva as cited in Kerrins & Cushing, 2000).

Principals are faced with multiple responsibilities, including responsibility for teacher supervision, student discipline, and transformational organizational change (Kellar & Slayton, 2013; Zepeda, 2006). Within the supervisory role, principals have traditionally been expected to be both instructional leaders and instructional enforcers for teachers. The principal-as-supervisor works collaboratively with the teacher to support and encourage professional growth; the principal-as-evaluator is charged with formally assessing job performance. This tension affects the relationship between the principal and teachers; it can be collegial within the context of supportive supervision, and combative during a formal evaluation year (Cooper, 2005). Given this apparent contradiction, and the possibility of encountering conflict as a result of fulfilling these contradictory roles,

maintaining a focus on instruction through teacher supervision and evaluation may be daunting, especially for the new principal.

Such observations have encouraged researchers to examine how principals may allocate their time differently (Brown & Wynn, 2007). Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis of leaders' effects on student achievement concluded: "School leaders who focus on students' achievement and instructional strategies are the most effective. It is leaders who place more attention on teaching and focused achievement domains who have the higher effects [on student learning]" (p. 83). Researchers and practitioners have, thus, called on school leaders and, more specifically, new principals to "know, use and support best practices in classroom teaching—which remain the key activity in education" (Trachtman & Cooper, 2011, p. 41). Researchers and policymakers are also emphasizing that the essential job of the principal is ensuring that teachers are active leaders (Trachtman & Cooper, 2011), and that principals further working conditions in the school that support teacher collaboration and professional learning (Zepeda, 2006).

School improvement in core academics such as reading has been found to be directly related to the principal whose attention is aimed at teacher development (Fullan, 2003). Kellar and Slayton (2013) suggested, however, that while the existing research provides significant

> insight into the effects of leadership on teacher practice and student achievement it does not help us understand the ways in which external school, district, and other factors, as well as *internal personal conditions* [emphasis added] influence the extent to which a leader is successful in accomplishing what she sets out to accomplish. (p. 4)

Kellar and Slayton (2013) maintained that it is, therefore, essential to understand how leaders' efforts are "shaped by their conditions, their own beliefs, skills, and understandings about leadership and the actions they undertake" (p. 4). They suggested that such beliefs and skills are key to enhancing understanding of how principals deal with accountability directives and organizational change mandates as well as the "psychosocial" aspects and leader attributes that may impede or promote their own personal growth as newly initiated leaders.

Study Framework

A paper presented to the American Educational Research Association in 2013 (Kellar & Slayton, 2013) that drew on and expanded an earlier dissertation (Martinez-Kellar, 2012) provided an overview of extant educational leadership literature addressing traditional and contemporary educational leadership literature. This review of the historical progression of school leadership studies identified a transition from a concern with leadership effects on schools (largely utilizing quantitative methods) to a concern with the psychological and organizational dimensions of leading people in an organizational context. Kellar and Slayton (2013) developed a conceptual framework that combined traditional leadership concepts with constructs found in the "psychosocial and organizational learning" (p. 4) areas that appear crucial to providing a more nuanced examination of the factors that influence principals' ability to foster organizational change and improvement. Specifically, Kellar and Slayton (2013) and Martinez-Kellar (2012) identified two psychosocial aspects of leadership: mental models and leader self-efficacy, as well as aspects of organizational learning including immunities for change (see also Kellar & Slayton, in press). Regarding *mental models*, Kellar and Slayton (in

press) drew on Senge (2006), to describe them as "systems of evolving thought that govern an individual's observable behaviors ... and the inherent assumptions the individual forms about the way their world works." Regarding *self-efficacy*, Bandura (1977) described it as "a conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce given outcomes . . . the strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with given situations" (p. 3). Kellar and Slayton defined *leader self-efficacy,* in particular, as "the level of confidence a leader has in her ability to lead her organizational members effectively based on her perceived knowledge, skills, and attributes" (Machida & Schaubroeck as cited in Kellar & Slayton, 2013, pp. 11-12). Finally, *immunities to change* can be described as "the underlying barriers that prevent an individual from making progress toward a desired professional goal" (Helsing, Howell, Kegan, & Lahey as cited in Martinez-Kellar, 2012, p. 6).

Building on case studies of two high schools where new principals were working with their leadership teams and faculty to achieve organizational changes (e.g., greater sharing and use of student achievement data), Kellar and Slayton (2013) observed that high leader self-efficacy interacted with observed mental models (underlying and evolving thoughts and assumptions) to foster conditions to promote organizational improvement. The result was a conceptual model that included the two intersecting concepts of organizational learning contexts and leadership practice that together interact to bring about organizational change. They asserted the following:

1. There exists an intersection and interaction of elements translating into practices that lead to the possibility of achieving a desired organizational change outcome.

2. Organizational change occurs at the intersection of leadership practice and the organizational context.

3. The types and level of leadership practices employed by the principal are enacted as a result of the interaction of the principal's views of leadership (psychosocial aspects) and the leader attributes they possess. (p. 23)

Study Purpose

In 2009, The Wallace Foundation published a perspective that highlighted the importance of examining how—and if—school leaders are leading the effort to improve instruction in part through evaluating leadership practice. They stated:

> While assessing school leaders isn't a new idea, research concludes that most assessments in use today are not as focused on learning as they should be, nor are they effective in gathering reliable facts about how leaders' behaviors are or are not promoting the learning agendas of schools and entire districts. (p. 1)

The purpose of this study was to draw on Kellar and Slayton's (2013) model of organizational learning context (i.e., conditions that foster school improvement) and leadership practice to explore in two elementary schools, new principals' views of instructional leadership and organizational improvement. These views include administrators' roles in teacher evaluation and supervision. I particularly explored the perceptions of novice principals regarding their (a) definitions of their roles as instructional leaders; (b) definitions of their roles to facilitate organizational change, (c)

mental models, self-perceptions of efficacy, and building organizational relationships, (d) views and enactment of teacher evaluation and supervision; and (e) views of how principals are facilitated and constrained in their instructional leadership and school improvement efforts.

This research was the second phase of a study initiated with a pilot study of novice principals (Barnitz, 2012). The term *novice* or *new* was used in the pilot and current study to describe principals in their first 3 years in the position (Alvy & Coladarci, 1985). The principals interviewed for this current study were in their second year in the principalship. In the current study, principal interviews were semi-structured, following the lead of Kellar and Slayton (2013), Leithwood et al. (2004), and Brown and Wynn (2007). Interview questions focused on eliciting principal backgrounds, leadership practices, leader efficacy, mental models, psychosocial attributes, and conditions principals believed were important for organizational improvement. Interviews also focused on attitudes and behaviors regarding the teacher supervision and evaluation process, which has been identified as particularly challenging for new principals. In addition, in each school, I interviewed two teachers in each school and conducted site walkthroughs with each principal, informally observing the site's classrooms. Descriptive documents including district and site reports were also collected (e.g., school accountability reports and descriptions of school improvement agendas).

The two principals were in neighboring school districts on the central coast of California. The schools served students with fairly similar student demographics (e.g., high percentages of students receiving free or reduced price student lunches) and achievement outcomes, as measured and reported by their individual School

Accountability Reports (SARC) (California Department of Education, 2011). Due to lower student proficiency rates on state testing, both schools were officially labeled by the state as *underperforming schools.*

Research Questions

1. What are new principals' views of instructional leadership, teacher evaluation and supervision, and organizational improvement?
2. What constrains and supports new principals in these roles?
3. What are the similarities and differences in these views across two principals?
4. To what extent do new principals' mental models and leader self-efficacy influence their ability to enact organizational improvement as suggested in Kellar and Slayton's (2013) framework?

Overview of the Method

This study primarily used a qualitative interviewing method. Principal interviews followed a structure characteristic of an in-depth interview in that they had an express purpose, and the interviewer exercised "direct control over construction of data" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 676). The principal interview protocol (see Appendix A) was inspired by protocols designed by Brown and Wynn (2007), Leithwood et al. (2004), and Martinez-Kellar (2012) for their research on principals' perceptions of the factors that influence leadership practice in supporting instructional leadership and organizational improvement. The protocol also drew on interview questions from a pilot study (Barnitz, 2012). The interview was semi-structured, beginning with an informal interview approach followed by a set of standardized, open-ended questions. Probes were scripted beforehand (Patton, 1990) and were used to extract clarification or elaboration (Murphy, 1980). The interviews were recorded on two digital devices, transcribed, and coded, using the en vivo coding method (Saldana, 2009).

Study Importance

Little research has focused on new principals' perceptions of a variety of leadership aspects since the enactment of federal legislation known as No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). This legislation heightened the attention on school improvement through enforcing sanctions on schools not meeting yearly student achievement targets (Brown and Wynn, 2007). According to Petzko (as cited in O'Doherty & Ovando, 2013, p. 534), "Although there is a recurrent call for substantive reform in graduate programs in educational leadership, little has been written from the perspective of the new principal." Therefore, this study of new leader perspectives appeared particularly relevant at a time of increased accountability as well as mandates for organizational change, particularly in low-performing schools.

Further, Zepeda (2006) observed that low-income communities were often challenged with teacher quality issues (e.g., hiring alternatively certified teachers, p. 63), thus necessitating high-quality principal supervision. For example, the different competencies of alternatively certified teachers (who may be older and have worked in different occupational settings) could serve as a starting point for principals to further adult learning and professional growth (p. 63). In exploring new principals' views, this study could be of assistance to those responsible for the training and support that may be needed to facilitate novice principals in successful teacher evaluation and supervision, as well as in organizational change and improvement.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. This chapter contained the introduction, study framework, study purpose, research questions, overview of the

method, study importance, and organization. Chapter 2 provides a background of related literature on principals' changing work responsibilities and stresses, supervisory and evaluation roles, and shifts in envisioning the principal role from management to organizational improvement (Kellar & Slayton, 2013). A figure from Martinez-Kellar's (2012) work is included, along with a figure illustrating an adaptation of the model for use in this study. Chapter 3 outlines a rationale for qualitative interviewing, and describes an initial pilot study as well as the data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the findings, and Chapter 5 is an overview of the study and relevant research, how it is consistent with and in contrast to this study, and how this study may have implications for practice and future research.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

As Hallinger and Murphy (1985) stated in their classic article on instructional leadership, "The principal appears to exert . . . influence primarily as the school's instructional manager or leader" (p. 217). However, the role of principal as instructional leader is complex. Principals, for example, might be expected to be instructional leaders and facilitators while simultaneously being instructional rule followers and enforcers (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). This literature review is intended to provide a contextual backdrop to the study, while also providing a base of knowledge related to the roles and challenges of new principals. In this chapter, three areas are addressed: principals' changing responsibilities and stresses; principal supervisory and evaluation roles; and a shift in models of leadership from management to instructional leadership to fostering organizational change and improvement.

Overview of Principals' Changing Responsibilities and Stresses

Principals appear to be under increased stress, as work demands require more of them than of their counterparts in the past. For example, a study conducted every 10 years by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2008) revealed that 21st century principals now work longer hours, and in larger schools with an increased staff to supervise. Additionally, 94% of principals in a study by Petzko, Clark, Valentine, and Hackmann (2002) reported workweeks exceeding 50 hours. These increases in demands are derived from several sources.

First, principals are facing new accountability frameworks and organizational change mandates. For example, the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S.

Department of Education, 2001) has placed pressure on principals and schools to meet specific academic targets. The consequences of not meeting targets for more than 1 year begin with interventions such as obligatory action plans to eventual takeover by the state. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran's (2003) study revealed that three-quarters of the principals in their study perceived the emphasis on tests scores and accountability as the primary factor in changing the role of the principal. As site managers, principals are charged with finding ways to motivate, educate, and mandate research-based instructional practices, with the hopes that these will increase yearly academic proficiency rates for a diverse population of students.

Second, the principals also reported that managing stress is a major issue in their profession. Principals encounter potentially problematic situations throughout any given day. Referred to as a *problem environment* in general (Peterson, 1985), the needs of the school site impose restrictions on the amount of time a principal can spend on leadership practices focused on the technical core (i.e., teaching and learning). For example, one study (Alvy & Coladarci, 1985) reported that 78% of the difficulties novice principals face were directly related to instructional leadership practices of "improving the school-wide curriculum, and promoting and monitoring teacher effectiveness in the classroom," along with "duties concerning potential conflict and confrontation with staff" (p. 48).

As noted in Chapter 1, observers suggest that effective leaders spend the majority of the time focused on the tasks tied to instructional leadership or on improving teaching practices and student achievement (Hattie, 2009; Levine, 2005). In contrast, is evidence to support the claim that principals spend more time on managerial tasks and "putting out fires" than on instructional practices (Oliva as cited in Kerrins & Cushing, 2000). In this

context, numerous observers have noted that preparing and socializing novices into the job of principal is particularly daunting (e.g., Alvy & Coladarci, 1985; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). The possible results of these varied demands, some researchers suggest, are stress and burnout.

Administrator Stress and Burnout

In studying how the individual interacts with stress, McGrath (as cited in Gmelch & Torelli, 1993) conceptualized a four-stage cycle in which the individual perceives the stressors, interprets the stressors, chooses a reaction to the stressors and, finally, responds with a behavior. A similar model, Gmelch's (1991) Administrator Stress Cycle, emerged from research on principals and job-related stress. The first stage involves a set of demands or stressors placed on the administrator; in stage two, the stressors are perceived by the administrator, who then determines the nature of the stressors; in stage three, the administrator responds to the stressor; and stage four involves the consequences of the response to that stressor.

Some researchers have studied how different stressors lead to principal burnout (Friedman, 2002; Bauer & Brazer, 2010; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Torelli & Gmelch, 1992; Whitaker & Vogel, 2005). Whitaker (1995) described burnout as "high stress levels and role overload" (p. 287). Maslach and Letier (2008) conceptualized stress as "a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job" (p. 399). Maslach and Jackson (1981) described burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work' of some kind" (p. 99).

Freidman (2002) posited that principals feel accomplished when they perceive they are successful leaders. Without this perception, self-doubt regarding their competency can lead to stress. To conceptualize how stress may lead to burnout in principals, Friedman developed a personal efficacy discrepancy (PED) model:

> The administrator, without adequate preparation for adaptation to school reality, enters a highly complex world demanding rapid response to many varied, often conflicting demands. At some point, principals learn that they cannot possibly live up to their own performance expectations regarding their various tasks. They become frustrated, exhausted, and feel unaccomplished, in other words, burned-out. Some consider abandoning teaching or school administration while others soldier on and learn to bear the burden imposed on them by their work. (p. 230)

To guide his study of principal burnout with 821 elementary and secondary principals in Israel, Friedman (2002) used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), along with interviews and open-ended questionnaires concerning role pressures to compare principals' perceived stress and burnout. Findings from his research suggested that principals are most affected by stress arising from staff (primarily teachers), parents, and work overload. More specifically, the weak performance of teachers, their "lack of discipline, and a demonstrable non-recognition of the principal's authority to tell them what to do, in professional, administrative and organizational terms" (p. 245) was the most highly correlated with principal burnout. It is interesting that Friedman (2002) also found that principals with less years of experience at their current sites were more likely to express burnout as a result of exhaustion and "depersonalization" (p. 232).

Challenges and Stresses of New Principals

Daresh (1986) specifically studied the challenges facing beginning principals. Data from intensive interviews with 12 first- and second-year principals indicated that *role clarification*, *job expertise*, and *socialization to the profession and system* were three areas of concern. In regard to role clarification, novice principals questioned their own decisions to become principals, noting a discrepancy between the perceived job and the actual job. They also struggled with their new position of authority and leadership. Concerning job expertise, two areas of challenge arose: lack of procedural knowledge specific to the district with which they belonged, and interpersonal relations. Some of the interpersonal challenges facing novice principals included difficulty with handling conflict, anxiety over evaluating teachers, and the lack of feedback they received regarding their job performance. Finally, novice principals were concerned with becoming socialized into the profession: to fit in and appear as if they knew what was going on. This was especially the case for novice principals hired into new districts.

St. Germaine and Quinn (2006) explored how expert and novice principals differed in their use of tacit knowledge, or knowledge gained from experience. They uncovered a difference between novice principals' handling of conflict-mediated stress and that of expert principals. Their findings suggested that novice principals

> often chose to wait to address problems rather than confront and resolve them. When novice principals did think about incidents as they transpired, they lost their perspective and reacted emotionally. Once they faced a problem, novice principals spent substantial time in anxious deliberation about possible solutions.

> Novice principals used words such as "dread" to describe feelings about problem resolution. (p. 81)

The behavior of novice principals in confrontational situations may suggest a decreased ability to manage stress. In confrontational situations, St. Germain and Quinn (2006) postulated, "novice principals became defensive, acted rashly, and jeopardized their relationships with staff members" (p. 84).

Goldring and Greenfield (2004) discussed the site principal's many conflicting roles as creating *dilemmas* for principals. Because the nature of the school context is "complex, dynamic, and fluid" (p. 15), school leaders are often faced with "various scenarios" that could "influence the ways in which leaders enact their roles and manage dilemmas" (p. 15). They wrote, "Dilemmas are durable value conflicts that leaders face again and again . . . Leadership requires a continuous struggle over competing values and unattractive options. To lead . . . is to confront dilemmas" (p. 12). Their analysis of three dilemmas principals experience in their positions may be particularly relevant to novice principals transitioning to the role.

The first dilemma is rooted in two distinct and often dissonant roles necessary to be an effective principal: the role of manager and the role of leader. This dilemma suggests a primary tension between supervision (part of the leader role), and evaluation (part of the manager role). Although principals have long been expected to fulfill both roles, the authors argue that there is increased pressure from the public and policymakers. For example, in some districts, student achievement results are used to measure teacher performance; schools state test scores are being published in local newspapers; and,

"schools are expected to engage a broader civic and social audience" (Goldring & Greenfield, 2004, p. 12). This dilemma could be seen as an example of role conflict.

A second dilemma is the increasing attention principals must pay to both the internal and external contexts of the school community. While a principal's focus was historically on the smooth running of the school (the internal context), the needs of the community are placing more demands on the principal's time and energy. Principals are expected to foster and create "community development and full service schools . . . to address the deepening distress in many urban communities" (Goldring & Greenfield, 2004, p. 13). This dilemma could be conceptualized as role overload.

Finally, a third dilemma concerns decision-making. On one hand, new principals may be expected to engage in collaborative decision-making, meanwhile assuming ultimate responsibility for decisions made regarding their school site. Goldring and Greenfield (2004) pointed out:

> Formal authority is vested in the educational leader, by virtue of his/her position. The responsibility inherent in these positions requires making tough choices that may not be satisfactory to parents, teachers, or others . . . School leaders are caught in the dilemma of encouraging participation and fostering a consensus model while they rely on individual authority to influence important decisions and outcomes. (p. 15)

The uncertainty concerning decision-making could be considered an aspect of role ambiguity.

Principal Supervisory and Evaluation Roles

School improvement research has supported the notion that teacher effectiveness is one of the most important factors for improvement (Blase & Blase, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Harris & Sass, 2011; Hattie, 2009). Both researchers and practitioners have emphasized the importance of school leadership in improvement, where a primary job of the principal is to ensure teacher effectiveness. For example, Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis of effects on student achievement concluded that, "school leaders who focus on students' achievement and instructional strategies are the most effective. It is leaders who place more attention on teaching and focused achievement domains who have the higher effects [on student learning] (p. 83).

Fullan (2003) also observed that improvement in core academics, such as reading, has been attributed directly to principal involvement and attention toward teacher development. Furthermore, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) noted that supervising and evaluating instruction is a key aspect of a principal's overall management of the instructional program (Hallinger, 2003, p. 336).

Although observers have urged principals to ensure teacher effectiveness, they have also suggested that the role of principals as evaluators and supervisors can result in complex and potentially contradictory interactions with teachers. Principals, for example, may be expected to serve as both an instructional leader and facilitator while simultaneously serve as instructional rule enforcer. As noted earlier, the principal-as-supervisor could work collaboratively with the teacher to support and encourage professional growth (Zepeda, 2006); in contrast, the principal-as-evaluator could be charged with formally evaluating and assessing job performance. This tension may

detrimentally affect the clarity of the principal's role as well as the relationship between the principal and the teacher. Cooper (2005) noted that principal-teacher relationships can be collegial within the context of supportive supervision, but excessively formal (or even combative) during an evaluation year. Given the inherent tension in roles, with the possibility of conflict, maintaining a focus on both supervision and evaluation can be a daunting aspect of the principal's role.

For the novice principal, attempting to manage the divergent, yet interrelated, roles of teacher supervision and teacher evaluation may be particularly challenging. As noted, one study (Alvy & Coladarci, 1985) reported that 78% of the difficulties novice principals faced were directly related to the instructional leadership practices of "improving the school-wide curriculum, and promoting and monitoring teacher effectiveness in the classroom," along with "duties concerning potential conflict and confrontation with staff" (p. 48); that is, the role of supervisor and the role of evaluator.

Researchers and policymakers have repeatedly called upon principal preparation programs to better equip future leaders with education and training in effective instructional leadership practices and school improvement (Leithwood et al., 2004; The Wallace Foundation, 2009). As noted, research has suggested that effective leaders spend the majority of their time focused on the tasks tied to instructional leadership (i.e., improvement of teaching practices and student achievement) (Hattie, 2009; Levine, 2005). In contrast, other research has suggested that generally principals spend more time on managerial tasks and "putting out fires" than on instructional practices (Oliva as cited in Kerrins & Cushing, 2000). This may be particularly true for the novice principal who could need more time to effectively complete managerial tasks.

It is interesting that some researchers have observed a causal relationship between a principal's actions and a principal's cognitive functioning. In other words, as principals think, so they act (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995; Leithwood et al., 2004; McCormick, 2001; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Tschanen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). One example of the relationship between thought and action is found in the work of Tschanen-Moran and Gareis (2004). They identified Bandura's (1997) construct of self-efficacy as a critical factor in enabling leaders to positively influence school effectiveness.

> [It] is the principal's own sense of efficacy—that is, a principal's determination of his or her own effectiveness at a given task or set of tasks, considering his or her own capabilities and experiences, as well as the context in which he or she is working, that is at the heart of a principal's ability to successfully perform. (p. 3)

Kellar and Slayton (2013) also addressed the topic of leader self-efficacy. After discussing two threads of leadership research—traits and leadership models (e.g., instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and distributed leadership)—they turned to psychosocial aspects of leadership (including mental models and leader self-efficacy). They characterized *self-efficacy* as "belief systems individuals hold regarding their ability to accomplish a certain goal or task" (Bandura as cited in Kellar & Slayton, 2013). They also defined *leader self-efficacy* as "the level of confidence a leader has in her ability to lead her organizational members effectively based on her perceived knowledge, skills, and attributes" (Machida & Schaubroeck as cited in Kellar & Slayton, 2013, pp. 11-12).

Research suggests teacher supervision and evaluation are challenging, particularly for the novice principal. Are novice principals with higher levels of self-efficacy more effective at supervising and evaluating teachers?

While viewed as two different roles, educational researchers and practitioners do differ on how they view the relationship between teacher supervision and teacher evaluation. It has been described as both complementary (Blase & Blase, 2004) and ineffective in its current state (Marshall, 2005). Even more basic, there are also disagreements about definitions of the roles. Supervision has been defined as both supporting teacher growth and controlling teacher action (Nolan & & Hoover, 2008), while teacher evaluation, on the other hand, is described as the process of "rating, grading, and classifying of teachers" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002, p. 164) and as "the mission of eliminating incompetent teachers" (McGreal, 1983, p. 2). Nevertheless, it appears generally agreed that supervision and evaluation of instruction are two interrelated functions that a site administrator performs. Despite a most basic consensus, the lack of a unifying vision regarding the role and function of evaluation and supervision has led to vastly different approaches to supervision and evaluation in practice. These differing approaches may also influence the support and training currently offered new and prospective school administrators.

Historically, there has been a "tug-of-war between the evaluative and helping functions of supervision" (Nolan & Hoover, 2008, p. 4). Depending on the direction of the philosophical pendulum swing in educational pedagogy and policy, the role of the administrator shifts from weeding out less than competent teachers (Nolan & Hoover, 2008) to supporting teacher growth (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002). Regardless of the

dueling interpretations (or perhaps as a result of these), supervision and evaluation have been the subjects of many reform movements aiming to systematically change the way they are conducted at the site level.

Evaluation and Supervision for New Principals: Preparation and Training

An important topic for reform is the discussed urgent need for aspiring principals to be trained in both evaluation and supervision. A study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) stated, "committed leaders who understand instruction and can develop the capacities of teachers and schools are key to improving educational outcomes for all students" (p. 7). Petzko (2008) cited numerous studies having shown that "the training principals typically receive in university programs and from their own districts does not do nearly enough to prepare them for their roles as leaders of learning" (p. 224). The National Governor's Association (Grossman, 2011) published an issue brief in 2011 regarding the need for principal preparation programs to train principals in teacher evaluation, stating that, "the training should impart information on how to . . . drive improvements in teaching and learning by providing actionable feedback to teachers" (p. 2).

In examining exemplary principal preparation programs, it was found that successful programs shared a vision of teacher supervision and evaluation as key to the success of principals and the schools they lead (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). While many experts have stressed the importance of focusing time and energy on instruction, as noted there is research showing that novice principals tend to spend more time on management tasks than on instruction (Oliva as cited in Kerrins & Cushing, 2000). In Kerrins and Cushing's (2000) study, novice and expert principals watched videos of

teaching events and subsequently evaluated the teachers. Clear differences emerged between what the expert and novice principals observed. Whereas novice principals tended to focus on management and teaching techniques, expert principals questioned the lesson objectives and teacher clarity (i.e., whether students understood the objectives). Similarly, Petzko's (2008) research revealed that principals felt their programs did not prepare them for the role of supervisor and evaluator of instruction. Comparable results were found by Levine (2005), who reported that 90% of principal survey respondents said that schools of education "fail to focus on the core business of schools—teaching and learning" (p. 49).

Identifying the capabilities of a teaching staff may not only determine the direction a principal takes, it may also reveal the levels of self-efficacy that individual teachers, and the staff as a whole may possess. This self-efficacy level may provide the principal, especially the novice, with additional insight and challenges, especially in terms of supervising and evaluating teachers.

According to Haefele (as cited in Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 8), there are seven purposes for both supervising and evaluating teachers. They are to: (a) screen out unqualified candidates from certification and selection, (b) provide constructive feedback to educators, (c) recognize and reinforce outstanding service, (d) provide direction for staff development, (e) provide evidence that will withstand professional and judicial scrutiny, (f) aid institutions in terminating incompetent or unproductive personnel, and (g) unify teachers and administrators in their collective efforts to educate students. Table 1 is an attempt by Haefele (as cited in Danielson & McGreal, 2000) to divide several

Table 1

Distinguishing Between the Purposes of Supervision and Evaluation

Purposes of Teacher Supervision	Purposes of Teacher Evaluation
Provide constructive feedback	Screen out unqualified candidates
Recognize and reinforce outstanding service	Recognize and reinforce outstanding service
Unify teachers and administrators in their collective efforts to educate students	Provide evidence that will withstand professional and judicial scrutiny
Provide direction for staff development	Aid institutions in terminating incompetent or unproductive personnel

Note. Based on Haefele's seven purposes of evaluation (as cited in Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 8).

purposes between what many researchers consider supervision and what they may consider evaluation.

Categorizing supervision and evaluation processes in this way highlights what kind of efficacy work a principal must do in order to effectively supervise and evaluate teachers. A new principal must be able to have high levels of leader self-efficacy to support growth in an average teacher while at the same time mandating change from a struggling one. In addition, to be effective in these conflicting roles, research suggests that the principal must also take into account the teacher's sense of self-efficacy (Protheroe, 2008).

Bandura (1993) suggested that it is the teacher's sense of self-efficacy that determines the overall effectiveness of the learning environment. Teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy create classroom environments in which students are more often challenged, praised, and supported according to their specific needs (Gibson & Dembo as cited in Bandura, 1993). Additionally, research by Ashton and Webb (as cited in Bandura, 1993) suggested that teachers' levels of self-efficacy were predictors of student achievement in both math and language. This finding has implications for the principal that are directly related to their roles as supervisors and evaluators. As Bandura (1993) suggested:

> The quality of leadership is also an important contributor to the development and maintenance of effective schools. Strong principals excel in their ability to get their staff to work together with a strong sense of purpose and to believe in their capabilities to surmount obstacles to educational attainment. (p. 141)

Furthermore, Bandura's (1993) research led him to posit that schools with low collective self-efficacy—in which the school staff as a unit feels immobilized to help students succeed academically against forces such as poverty—relay a "sense of academic futility that can pervade the entire life of the school" (p. 141). In contrast, a staff that believes in their ability to influence student achievement convey "a positive atmosphere for development" (p. 141). It appears to not be enough for a principal to have high personal levels of self-efficacy; a principal must promote, support, and maintain high levels of self-efficacy in individual teachers as well as the staff as a whole.

Shifts in Envisioning the Principal Role From Management to Instructional Leadership to Organizational Improvement

Since the 1980s, instructional leadership has appeared to become a focus of educational reform. Policy reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner, 1983), coupled with empirical studies, focused on the influence of instructional leadership in schools that were viewed as particularly effective (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Edmonds, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Literature on instructional leadership de-emphasized the managerial role of principals, promoting instead the view of the principal as one actively involved in the technical core: the classroom (Achilles, 1983; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Murphy, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1983).

Although a major focus of research, definitions of instructional leadership have varied. Through a review of effective schools research, Achilles (1987) synthesized a definition of effective instructional leadership as placing an emphasis on

> a climate or environment for learning that is orderly and safe but not repressive; a sense of positive expectations for achievement on the part of everyone in the

school; and an interest in using data derived from assessment of student progress to help guide the instructional program. (p. 20)

In contrast to this definition of the instructional leader, Burlingame (1987) suggested three different (and potentially conflicting) images of instructional leaders. These included (a) the pragmatic, top-down leader; (b) the leader who adjusts his/her leadership role according to the cultural context of the school; and (c) the bottom-up leader, whose leadership efficacy is contingent upon staff consensus. Within the context of these diverse roles for instructional leaders, Burlingame posited that "confusion over the [roles] produces the classic double bind" for principals: "On the one hand . . . [p]rincipals are told how other truly effective administrators do their work using some universal kit . . . On the other hand, the moment that principals seek to follow these universal remedies . . . somebody objects" (p. 9).

As research interest in instructional leadership increased, efforts to clarify instructional leadership practices arose. One such effort that had a major influence on the conceptualization and analysis of instructional leadership behaviors came from Hallinger (1982) and Hallinger and Murphy (1985). In 1982, Hallinger developed the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS*)*, based on a conceptual framework that he and colleague Murphy (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) would later refine and name the Instructional Management Framework. A primary purpose of the PIMRS was to conceptualize instructional leadership as having components that increased student achievement (Hallinger, 1983). Over the last 30 years, the PIMRS has been widely used by researchers in quantitative studies evaluating instructional leadership practices. Hallinger (2005) cited its use in over 100 studies between 1980 and 2000.

Despite its widespread use, not all studies incorporating PIMRS have established a successful (quantitative) connection between instructional leadership and student achievement. As Fultz (2011) pointed out, although some studies suggested that instructional leadership has positive effects on student achievement (e.g., see Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1981; Edmonds, 1979), a direct relationship between the use of instructional leadership practices and student achievement was not found in others (e.g., see Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Furthermore, some researchers (Elmore, 2000; Hausman, Crow, David, & Sperry, 2000; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004) shared their skepticism of leadership research that does not take into account the many contextual factors that shape school leadership. For instance, according to Hallinger and Murphy (1985):

> Studies of leadership suggest that managerial behavior is strongly influenced by organizational and societal contexts (Dwye, 1984; Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). There is no reason to believe that instructional management differs in this respect. Therefore, it is likely that various principal behaviors will prove more or less effective for different schools and under diverse conditions. (p. 218)

Kellar and Slayton Framework

As noted in Chapter 1, Kellar and Slayton (2013) built on qualitative studies that have sought to examine such elements as mental models to assert that school leadership studies progressed from emphasizing the effects that leadership exerted on schools to focusing on the psychological and organizational factors that influence leadership practices in an organizational context. In their review of leadership literature, Kellar and

Slayton (2013) identified a shift since 2000 from viewing the principal's role as manager and disciplinarian to "one that includes responsibility for organizational and transformative change" (p. 5). Initially, they cited literature focused on identifying the characteristic of effective school leadership. They classified this literature into two parts: leader traits (e.g., clear communication skills, intelligence, and integrity) and leadership models (instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and distributed leadership).

Kellar and Slayton's (2013) conceptual framework, which extended traditional leadership models with psychosocial and organizational constructs, conceptualized a multidimensional examination of the factors that influence principals' ability to foster organizational change and improvement. Particular constructs they identified were two psychosocial aspects of leadership: mental models and leader self-efficacy, and aspects of organizational learning including immunities to change.

Martinez-Kellar Framework

The Kellar and Slayton (2013) framework evolved from a framework presented by Martinez-Kellar (2012) in her dissertation research, in which she examined how the interaction of four leadership constructs—mental models, leader self-efficacy, immunities to change, and leader creativity—influenced leadership behaviors and practices that created an environment that might foster organizational change (see Figure 1). According to Senge (1990), "mental models are deeply ingrained and assumptions . . . that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 174).

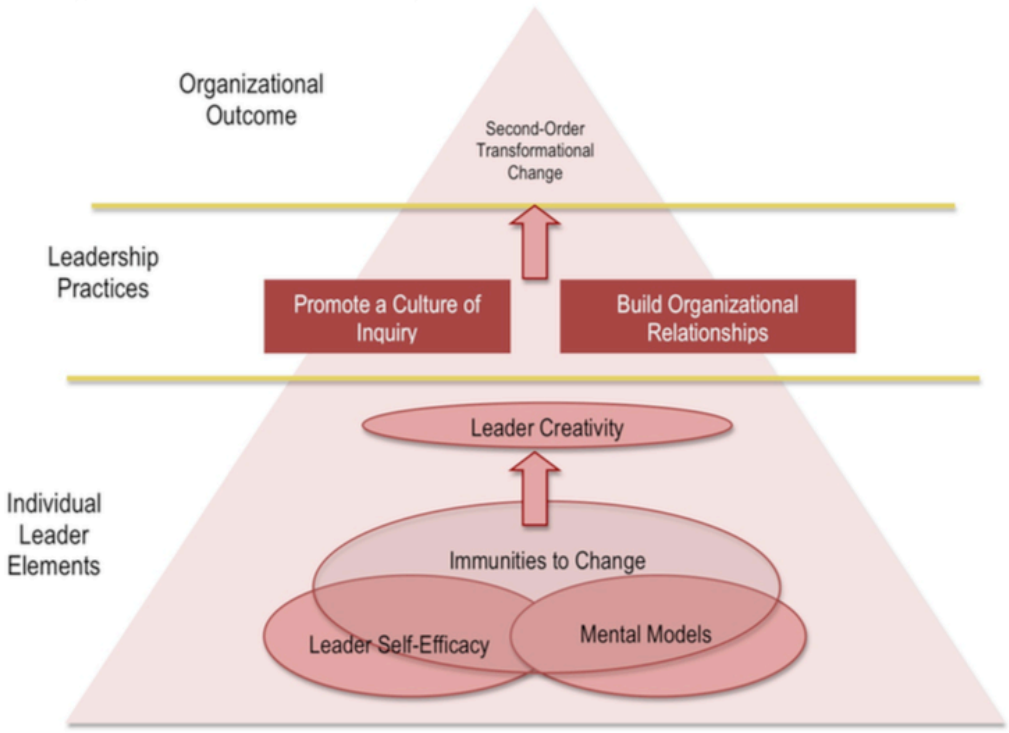

Figure 1. Presentation of conceptual framework (Martinez-Kellar, 2012). Adapted from Martinez-Keller (2012) with permission, Dr. Martinez-Kellar, written communication, February 2016.

Martinez-Kellar's (2012) research was a case study utilizing qualitative interviews with two high school principals who worked closely with faculty members to attempt to foster positive organizational change. Both principals had beginning or emergent experience as a principal (0-5 years). For her study, Martinez-Kellar constructed case descriptions of two high schools within the same district: Crystal Academy, a low-performing charter high school with a small student body; and Elysium Fields, a high-performing regular high school with a large student body. The students at both schools had substantial numbers of students who were from low-income families, and the student body was culturally diverse. Both schools were in the process of undergoing organizational change.

Through interviews, observations, and document gathering, along with a cross-case analysis of the data, Martinez-Kellar (2012) found:

> High levels of self-efficacy and mental models were not enough to influence practices associated with organizational change when these two elements intersect with a principal's own *immunity to change* [i.e., underlying barrier, emphasis not in the original] in addition to some external constraints. This led to lower levels of creative thinking with the principal enacting traditional approaches in conducting professional development and practicing leadership. (p. 203)

The two case studies revealed differences in each principal's mental models, or underlying beliefs of what an effective principal is or does**.** For example, at Crystal Academy, the principal's mental model (underlying thoughts and assumptions) included *the principal is an instructional leader*, *the principal uses data with teachers*, and *the principal models the behaviors and practices she expects from her faculty*. At that school,

first-year Principal A demonstrated her mental models by focusing her efforts on instructional leadership. At Elysium Fields High, fourth-year Principal B's mental models led her to eschew the role of instructional leadership and, instead, to focus on structural change as the catalyst for organizational change.

Cross-case analysis suggested similarities, however, in the outcomes of both principals' efforts to affect organizational change while enacting on these mental models. Both leaders exhibited high levels of self-efficacy, and low levels of ability to self-reflect, which manifested as an *immunity to change*, indicating low self-awareness of one's own mental model. Martinez-Kellar (2012) suggested this was a determining factor that impeded organizational improvement in both schools.

Drawing on Martinez-Kellar's (2012) case study research and employed conceptual model, Kellar and Slayton (2013) posited that the interaction between high leader self-efficacy and observed mental models was the catalyst for creating the conditions that would foster organizational improvement. This conceptualization resulted in a framework depicting the intersection of two concepts: the organizational learning context and leadership practice, with the intersection of these bringing about organizational change. Their assertion was the following:

1. There exists an intersection and interaction of elements translating into practices that lead to the possibility of achieving a desired organizational outcome.
2. Organizational change occurs at the intersection of leadership practice and the organizational context.

3. The types and level of leadership practices employed by the principal are enacted as a result of the interaction of the principal's psychosocial aspects and the leader attributes they possess. (Kellar & Slayton, 2013, pp. 24-25)

This study will draw from these frameworks by eliciting the perspectives of principals about the elements in the model. Figure 2 is a depiction of the study framework.

Implications of the Literature Reviewed for the Study

Several points from the literature reviewed in this section have shaped this research. First, previous literature (e.g., Haefele [as cited in Danielson & McGreal, 2000]) has placed an emphasis on identifying the challenges confronting new principals, including addressing the tension between teacher supervision and teacher evaluation. Therefore, the proposed study explored novice principals' perceptions of their roles as supervisor and evaluator, and the associated demands and constraints in two different organizational contexts.

Second, previous literature (e.g., Martinez-Kellar, 2012) has explored the extent to which leadership promotes organizational change and improvement. Although I am primarily adapting interview questions formulated by Brown and Wynn (2007) and Martinez-Kellar, 2012, Leithwood et al.'s (1999-2008) work on instructional leadership, distributed leadership, and teacher professional development was also helpful in devising interview questions that could explore these leadership aspects.

Third, taking into account the shift in the conceptualization of principal leadership described by Kellar and Slayton (2013), I probed new principals' views of the following:

Figure 2. Proposed framework. Adapted from Martinez-Kellar (2012) and Kellar and Slayton (2013) for current study (Barnitz, 2016, unpublished dissertation).

1. Mental models that exert influence on leader's decision-making
2. Leader self-efficacy
3. Organizational relationships

Fourth, the case description constructed by Martinez-Kellar (2012) of principal leadership influenced this study's reporting of results. Case descriptions were constructed for the two novice elementary school principals in this study, which included integrating data from teacher interviews at the sites and school documents such as accountability reports.

Finally, the above literature review has suggested that it is particularly imperative that we explore principal leadership in schools with culturally diverse student populations and in low-income schools perhaps confronting issues of teacher recruitment quality and retention. This suggestion is taken into account in the proposed study's site selection of two schools serving culturally diverse students and parents as well as low-income student populations.

Chapter 3

Methods

Introduction

The literature on leadership models and psychosocial attributes provides a structure to study the complexities of the 21st century principalship, especially of new principals in their initial years in the position. It was the intention of this researcher that using qualitative interviewing methodology would provide insights into the perceptions of new principals in terms of these complexities.

Rationale for Qualitative Interviewing

Qualitative interviewing methodology was used to examine the perspectives of two new principals in neighboring districts on the central California coast. These districts were selected because of their accessibility to the university as well as both having schools that served low-income and ethnically diverse student populations. Qualitative interviewing is an appropriate methodology for this study, as it is purposed toward "obtain[ing] descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, pp. 5-6). In addition, two teachers from each school were interviewed in order to explore the "contemporary phenomena within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p. 13). In the case of these particular new principals, the school context may play a central role in their perceptions.

This study explored the perspectives of two new principals at the helm of schools faced with an urgent need to bring about change, as a result of ongoing poor performance as measured by yearly California state tests. The qualitative interviews were used to

explore principals' perceived behaviors and attitudes toward meeting this change mandate as well as to "obtain descriptions of . . . the social and material context" of the school setting (Kvale, 1996, p. 293). Interviews were designed to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of new administrators in a particular school and district context.

The Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted of four novice principals in one of the two districts that were utilized in this study (Barnitz, 2012). An interview protocol was then tested on these principals. The interview protocol focused primarily on novice principals' perceptions of instructional leadership, with an emphasis on supervision and evaluation. Although many of the interview questions from 2012 were used for the current study, the interview protocol was expanded to include questions that would also explore the principal as leader and facilitator of organizational improvement in line with Kellar and Slayton's (2013) framework.

Study Districts and Schools

The two school districts participating in this study were medium-sized suburban districts located along the central coast of California. One district included both elementary and secondary schools, while the other district was strictly elementary. The two elementary schools that participated were selected based on their principals' status as novice (within the first 3 years of their position), similarity of student demographics and socioeconomic status, and similarity of status as being in "Program Improvement" based on student achievement on California state tests. Based on discussions with a district contact, there also needed to be some evidence that the principal was attempting to lead school participants through organizational change at his or her site. It was the expectation

of the researcher that the perspectives of the two novice principals would be examined and then compared to reveal similarities and differences in mental models, and immunities to change. There would also be an effort to uncover themes in order to better understand the experience of the new principal in context.

Data Collection

The primary data source for this study was interviews with the two study principals. Additional data sources were interviews conducted with two teachers at each site, descriptive documents provided by the district and site, and site walkthroughs with each principal.

Two new principals at two school sites in neighboring school districts were interviewed. In addition, two teachers from each school site were interviewed to provide a contextual perspective of the new principals' leadership.

In order to retain the "initial vision and engagement throughout the investigation" (Kvale, 1996, p. 87), the research followed the Seven Stages of Interview Investigation (Kvale, 1996), beginning with deliberate *thematizing* to form a set of standardized, open-ended questions (p. 88). The principal interview protocol (see Appendix A) was inspired by the pilot study previously described (Barnitz, 2012), a protocol developed by Martinez-Kellar (2012) in her study of two principals and the complexity of fostering organizational improvement, and protocols used by Brown and Wynn (2007). The interviews followed a structure characteristic of an in-depth interview in that it would have an express purpose, and the interviewer would exercise "direct control over construction of data" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 676). Probes were scripted beforehand (Patton, 1990) and were designed to extract clarification or elaboration

(Murphy, 1980). The interviews were recorded on two digital devices and verbatim transcripts were produced. The interviews were coded using the en vivo coding method (Saldana, 2009).

Questions were designed to explore new principals' (a) views of instructional leadership and organizational improvement, including an emphasis on teacher supervision and evaluation; (b) perceived constraints and supports; (c) views of mental models and leader self-efficacy as influencing new principals' ability to enact organizational improvement as suggested in Kellar and Slayton's (2013) framework; and (d) similarities and differences in these views.

The interview questions were semi-structured to facilitate consistency between interviews with principals and interviews with teacher-participants. Questions were organized under four headings: (a) Background Information (including Perceived Strengths and Challenges of the School); (b) Changing Roles, Supervision and Evaluation; (c) Principal as Leader and Facilitator of Organizational Improvement, and (d) Wrap Up (see Appendix A). That is, questions were formulated to address background, behaviors, opinions and values, knowledge, and feelings (Murphy, 1980). In order to make clear the purpose of the interviews (Spradley, 1979), the protocol was shared with participants prior to the interviews. Although one participant is a colleague of the researcher, making the interviewer an insider, the nature of the relationships is professional. As noted, interviews were recorded and verbatim transcripts were produced.

Additionally, qualitative interviews of two teachers in each site were conducted to gain insight into leadership from different perspectives. Interview questions were designed similarly to the principals' questions and focused on the teachers' perceptions of

the principal's leadership practices around supervision and evaluation, her ability to foster organizational relationships and organizational change, her creativity in solving problems and working within constraints, and the relationship between her mental models and leader self-efficacy (see Appendix B).

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Kvale's (1996) stages of interview investigation that corresponded with analyzing, verifying, and reporting. The three stages provided a structure to analysis in an in vivo coding method "to an open and flexible interview study" (p. 87). This did not, however, negate the "interactive nature of qualitative research" (p. 87). Case descriptions were produced following the lead of Martinez-Kellar (2012). The case descriptions included leader background and preparation; views of instructional leadership; roles, responsibilities, and priorities; views of teacher supervision and evaluation; views of organizational relationships; and constraints and supports (Chapter 4). The cross-case analysis examined each leader's mental models and leader self-efficacy. Table 1 in Chapter 2, which differentiated purposes of supervision from purposes of teacher evaluation, was of assistance in coding for supervision/evaluation. For example, if the principal mentioned providing feedback in a coaching role, the statement was considered related to teacher supervision. If the principal mentioned the authority of her role and/or implications for judging performance/competence, this theme was considered related to teacher evaluation. To take a second example, for mental models, a principal could be considered to have a *systems leader* mental model if she mentioned some of the following themes: the school as a system, administrative components such as student discipline or personnel evaluation

as a system, data analysis as a system, and/or teacher meetings and collaboration as a system.

Along with interviews, documents were gathered to further understanding of the organizational context. For example, the School Accountability Report Card was reviewed to shed light on school demographics, student state test performance, teacher qualification, and condition of the school site. These factors would assist consideration of the demands and constraints that may influence leader decision-making when working to foster organizational improvement.

Finally, accompanying the new principal in classroom walkthroughs was performed. The objective of these observations was to view the principal in a context where, presumably, her stated mental models, leader creativity, and leader self-efficacy would be enacted. Martinez-Kellar (2012) conducted direct observations in order to "identify the underlying beliefs and assumptions the principal makes with respect to her role as a leader while examining the ways in which her behaviors and practices demonstrate these mental models" (pp. 113, 114).

Summary

The primary source of data was qualitative interviews. Using qualitative interviewing methods allowed the probing of principals on their perspectives regarding their background; changing roles, supervision and evaluation; and facilitation of organizational improvement. Interviewing was also used to further explore the principals' role in building organizational relationships and influencing organizational change through qualitative interviews of teachers at each new principal's school site. The expectation was that meaningful data would be collected, analyzed, and synthesized to

shed light on new principals' mental models, leader creativity and self-efficacy, and their ability to foster organizational change. Documentation and direct observation provided additional information regarding the organizational context and, as in the case of direct observation, provided a view of leadership-in-action.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore new principals' perceptions of instructional leadership, including their evaluation and supervision as well as views of their roles to facilitate organizational improvement. In particular, this study examined the perceptions of two novice principals regarding their (a) conceptions of their roles as instructional leaders; (b) conceptions of their roles to facilitate organizational change; (c) mental models, self-efficacy, and effectiveness in building organizational relationships; (d) views and enactment of teacher evaluation and supervision; and (e) views of how principals are facilitated and constrained in their instructional leadership and school improvement efforts.

In this chapter, I report on the findings that emerged from the collected data, analyzed through the lens of the framework inspired by, and modified from, Kellar and Slayton (2013). The model for this framework can be found in Chapter 3. The qualitative data collected came primarily from interviews of two principals and four teachers, from two different elementary school sites in neighboring districts. Other secondary forms of data collection included California state test data, school accountability reports, and yearlong professional development plans. In addition, site visits shed light on the physical context and climate of each school. Organization of this case study of two principals begins with a description of the two elementary schools sites followed by separate discussions of the two principals in the study, with a focus on views of instructional leadership, supervision and evaluation, organizational relationships, and constraints and

supports. The chapter concludes with a cross-case analysis of the two principals, focused on mental models and self-efficacy.

Site Descriptions

Descriptions for Schools A and B are presented in this section. Table 2 presents characteristics of each school, including numbers of students, year of the school in Program Improvement, and percentages of students receiving free and reduced-price lunches, who are English learners, and who are in different ethnicity categories. Each school is then described in narrative form, which includes a description of principal-identified site strengths and challenges. Narrative summaries of each principal are presented in the following section.

School A: Lincoln Elementary School

Located on the central coast of California, Lincoln Elementary sits atop a mesa, with an impressive view of the Pacific Ocean. The building is in classic Spanish style, with portables added to allow for the expanding population since its construction in the 1930s. With a school population of 99% of students who identify as Latino, the demographics of Lincoln reveal a pattern that is endemic to this and neighboring districts, which is racial segregation. Lincoln students come from primarily low socioeconomic backgrounds. Ninety-four percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, which is a national indicator for poverty levels. Furthermore, approximately 82% of students are identified as English learners at differing stages of English language acquisition. The total school population is 435 students. It is one of 12 elementary schools in a K-12 school district located on the central coast of California. Lincoln's 3-year Academic Performance Index (API) average, compiled from 3 years of state testing data from 2011

Table 2

Comparison of Lincoln Elementary and Buena Fortuna Elementary School

School A: Lincoln Elementary School	School B: Buena Fortuna Elementary School
K-6	K-6
Principal Leah McCloskey - 2nd year principal	Principal Myra O'Hare - 2nd year principal
435 students	477 students
24 teachers	21 teachers
Year 1 of Program Improvement	Year 2 of Program Improvement
94% free and reduced-price lunch	57% free and reduced-price lunch
82% English learners	49% English learners
99% Latino, .5% White, .5% Other	57% Latino, 24% White, 12% Asian, 7% Other
K-12 school district	K-6 school district

Note. Percentages are rounded.

to 2013, is 769. In California, a school with an Academic Performance Index of 800 or above is considered proficient.

In addition, Lincoln did not make Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP, a federal requirement under the federal Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 2002, also known as No Child Left Behind (Department of Education, 2001). Due to the percentage of students considered living in poverty, Lincoln receives federal funding known as Title I. As a result, the school is subject to sanctions when failing to meet certain criteria under the No Child Left Behind. Lincoln has been identified as a school in Program Improvement, as a result of years of not meeting federal Adequate Yearly Progress, as measured by student achievement data results on the California state tests. It is currently in Year 1 of Program Improvement.

As a Program Improvement school, Lincoln is required to develop a school improvement plan. Among the components of the school's improvement plan were the adoption of the Common Core Standards and other district-mandated initiatives. One district-mandated initiative particular to Lincoln was the comprehensive implementation of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) instruction in grades Kindergarten through Sixth. For Year 1 of Lincoln's transformation into a STEM pilot school, the district identified science as the instructional entry point. The plan called for intensive, ongoing professional development in science for teachers, led by outside consultants, with the goal of integrating daily science instruction throughout the grade levels.

Strengths of the school. In describing Lincoln, Principal McCloskey mentioned two major strengths of the school and three major challenges. First, she described a

"wonderful" school community and an "amazing" group of teachers who were "ready to try new things." In terms of the teachers, she said they were "really young," but continued by saying they were "very committed to the students." Second, when discussing parents, she noted that there was a "huge community of parents" willing to help out.

Challenges of the school. When she turned to challenges, McCloskey first pointed to the difficulty that parents had in taking on a leadership role with the organized Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Second, she noted the school's high rate of poverty and high number of English language learners. She noted that as a result of the "intense homes" that many of the students come from, Lincoln had the "highest counselor load of the district." An additional challenge she described was the huge responsibility teachers face, which made it difficult, at times, for teachers to "let it go" (that is, not dwell on students' problems at the end of the day). Despite these challenges, McCloskey summarized the strengths and challenges of Lincoln in this way:

> It's one of those [schools] where the teachers can really make a difference, because you're "it" in so many ways. So it wears you down, but at the same time you have the ability to really change the kids' lives.

School B: Buena Fortuna Elementary School

Located in a neighboring K-6 school district, Buena Fortuna Elementary boasts a modern style construction that mirrors the architecture found in the university that is located a stone's throw from its campus. Although the number of students is close to that of Lincoln School (Buena Fortuna has 477 students to Lincoln's 435), the population is more ethnically and socioeconomically diverse. Fifty-seven percent of students are

identified as Latino, 24% are identified as White, 12% are identified as Asian, and 7% as "other ethnicity." Fifty-seven percent of students are considered poor under federal free and reduced-price lunch guidelines. Due to their demographics, Buena Fortuna receives Title 1 funds and is currently in Year 2 of Program Improvement. The school is one of nine elementary schools in this K-6 district.

Buena Fortuna's 3-year Academic Performance Index average, compiled from 3 years of state testing data from 2011 to 2013, is 842. Although it is considered a proficient school according to the state index, from 2011-2013 Buena Fortuna did not meet the federal criteria of Adequate Yearly Progress. Therefore, the school is currently in Year 2 of Program Improvement.

As a Program Improvement school, Buena Fortuna is required to develop a school improvement plan. Among the components of the school's improvement plan was the adoption of the Common Core Standards. One of the district-mandated initiatives particular to Buena Fortuna was the implementation of reading fluency assessment and data analysis in grades Kindergarten through Sixth. The plan included frequent grade level meetings for teachers, with the goal of analyzing data and adjusting instruction according to student results (system documentation).

Strengths of the school. In describing Buena Fortuna, Principal O'Hare mentioned two major strengths of the school and two major challenges. According to O'Hare, a primary strength was the teaching and support staff. She characterized teachers and staff as "hard workers" who were "learners themselves." In terms of the teachers, she said they were critical thinkers who "don't just accept everything I say" and offer solid feedback *when she introduces novel ways of doing business*. Another strength was "the

wonderful families that are eager to ensure that their children are getting what they need." She described how many of her parents take two buses to arrive at the nearest supermarket as an example of their commitment to their children.

Challenges of the school. As to challenges, one major problem was poverty related. A second challenge was O'Hare's ability to schedule in the time teachers needed to successfully implement the Common Core Standards, engage in data collection and analysis, and plan to successfully teach English learners, which, according to her, required "a high level of expertise." She finished by describing her school in this way, highlighting the staff who were establishing strong connections to parents:

> We are opening a bridge between our families and the school, so that families are trusting that they can ask and advocate. [For instance], we have a wonderful school psychologist and after school program director who are establishing a strong connection where parents know they can go if they need something.

Principal Case Descriptions

The data are presented in this section as two case summaries, one for each principal. Each case is described through the backgrounds and preparation of each principal, and the views of the principals related to (a) instructional leadership in the school; (b) roles, responsibilities, and priorities; (c) teacher supervision and evaluation; (d) organizational relationships; (e) ability to enact organizational change and improvement; and (f) constraints and supports.

Case Study A: Principal Leah McCloskey, Lincoln Elementary

Background and preparation. Principal McCloskey was completing her second year as principal when I interviewed her in fall 2014. Although McCloskey was new to

her position, she had been an educator for more than two decades. An elementary school teacher for 26 years, she spent her career in education at the same K-12 school district to which Lincoln Elementary belongs. As noted by a teacher at Lincoln (discussed later), McCloskey was known to have come from one of the most affluent schools in the district prior to accepting the job as principal of Lincoln. During her long tenure, she described herself as "teaching lots of different grade levels" and taking on "a lot of leadership roles." She stated, "For a long time, I've been a leader." Her love of a challenge and at the urging of colleagues, she decided to become a principal. After obtaining her Administrative Services Credential (ASC) by attending her local California county of education Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) program, she applied several times within her district before "landing" her current position at Lincoln.

McCloskey described herself throughout her career as having "a vision for kids . . . of equity in education." Through her early experience as a Peace Corps volunteer, she developed her bilingual Spanish skills, which have served her well at a school with many Spanish-speaking families and students. Her passion for "equalizing education for kids" fit well with Lincoln, which she described as a "school of challenge" given its high rate of poverty and high number of English language learners.

When asked whether she felt prepared for her current leadership role, she described herself as ready in many ways, but also as having encountered some unexpected challenges. For instance, she felt positively about the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential program, which was "very applicable" to the job. However, although she stated that her first year as principal was "good," she described it as "a lot to take on," and recalls feeling "just numb." Some of the challenges of the

principal position, she noted, were the addition of many new district initiatives (such as science and math), having many first-year teachers, and dealing with the everyday uncertainty that accompanies the position.

> There were parts of me that were prepared, and parts of me that [weren't]. . . . Every day you never know what's going to hit you. I was exhausted and I absolutely loved it. It was very challenging, but it was good.

Views of instructional leadership: Shifts in the school and supporting teaching and learning. McCloskey described three recent shifts in the school dealing with her oversight of instructional programs and personnel. First, she stated that her school had become the "pilot school" for science instruction. As such, teaching science on a daily basis was "huge" and a "big change" for the school. To support teachers, the district had provided them with ongoing professional development in science through an outside contractor. A second shift was the introduction of lesson studies in math and science. Lesson study is an instructional format that involves long-term professional development for teams of teachers to collaboratively plan, research, and reflect on their lesson instruction as a way to improve teaching and learning. McCloskey noted that these instructional shifts required teachers to be "constant learners," and "ready for change all the time, and trying to learn new things." While McCloskey saw these shifts as beneficial, she stated that they required teachers to be out of their classrooms frequently, which many teachers did not want.

Finally, she mentioned that seven teachers on staff were new to the teaching profession. She explained that, "as a new teacher, you can have all sorts of great ideas but until you've done it a while, you make mistakes. New teachers require a lot of coaching,

and that takes time." When asked for more specific information about her role in supporting teaching and learning, she described her role as one of support, one that "provides the environment that teachers can teach in and so the kids can learn." She explained her priorities in this way, highlighting a focus on high expectations for all students and a focus on learning:

> My priorities are equity for students. . . . in student engagement, having students believe in their ability to learn and achieve. My priority is for high expectations for everybody. I work hard; I expect teachers to work hard. I expect everyone to believe in what they do and believe in yourself as a learner. A huge priority for me is just a focus on learning.

Description of roles, responsibilities, priorities. In describing her roles as a principal, McCloskey highlighted three: her educational leadership role, her instructional leadership role, and her managerial role. She defined the role of educational leader as being the "problem solver and a support for teachers." She referred to herself as a "really strong educational leader." However, she saw this in herself as a strength as well as a weakness. In her words, "I think I'm very supportive and tend to lead with an optimistic view . . . I believe in the good in people. But there are people who don't like change, and you can be blindsided by them."

Echoing her earlier statement about her views of instructional leadership, she reiterated her belief that teachers must be continually learning, and continually focused on student engagement. She made a distinction between her roles as educational (managerial) leader and instructional leader. When describing her instructional leadership role, she stated that she was "out in classrooms a lot," and that teachers were provided

with “a lot of professional development.” She described her managerial role as very important in order to keep the school safe. Other important aspects of the managerial role she mentioned were providing books for all students, keeping classrooms clean, and ensuring that all students have the materials they needed.

McCloskey discussed the importance of being both a managerial leader and an instructional leader; two roles, she emphasized, that demanded a great deal of time to execute successfully. When asked specifically about the role of managerial leader versus the role of instructional leader, she explained:

> There’s always the conflict between the two because you want to be that instructional leader, but you always get stuck with the managerial part. You need to be an instructional leader, but at the same time your school has to be safe. Time gets caught up with the managerial part. Sometimes I ask myself, “Why am I worrying if the yard duty showed up?” when I really want to be out there being the instructional leader. But you need to provide a safe environment for everybody and that takes management.

McCloskey discussed the need for balance between the two roles. In terms of the managerial role, she found in her second year she “began to count on people more,” learning to delegate responsibilities to make the managerial role less time intensive. One way she described maximizing time for instructional leadership was by keeping her staff meetings focused on teaching and learning. For example, she would send out weekly letters with any business items that needed to be addressed, thereby freeing up time during the meeting to “share engagement and strategies and talk about instructional issues.”

Views of teacher supervision and evaluation. When asked to describe her role in supervision and evaluation specifically, McCloskey described herself as mostly a "coach" who provided helpful feedback consistent with purposes of supervision (Table 1 in Chapter 2, Danielson & McGreal, 2000). She also noted that having many new teachers required a lot of coaching. Although primarily a purpose of supervision, her description of teacher evaluation meetings also emphasized this role as coach:

> They [teachers] come to me for an evaluation meeting, and we go over the lesson that I observed. I would often give advice on how to do a better job. I would say, "These are things you might want to try first" because I want people to succeed. I think it comes from years of being a teacher that I see myself as a coach.

McCloskey described evaluating teachers, because of its relationship to evaluating performance/competence (Table 1, Chapter 2) as "tricky." She described her evolving role as evaluator:

> You get better at [evaluating teachers] after you do it for a while. You begin to look at things [in the classroom] and you see this is something that's not working. You don't always see it in the beginning and it's something you have to learn.

When asked if she felt evaluating teachers might be something one learns while "on the job," as opposed to something one might have been prepared for prior to becoming a principal, she agreed. She compared this learning to a teacher's first year in teaching:

> The same thing happens to a principal as happens to a teacher when they come out of teacher training. The more you've evaluated, the more able you are to touch on things and notice things. And you learn from mistakes—hopefully. Because you're going to make mistakes.

When asked what supported or constrained her ability to effectively supervise and evaluate teachers, McCloskey stated that time was both a help and a hindrance.

> Time helps and also impedes [supervising and evaluating teachers] because the more you do it the better you get. The hard part for me is when you . . . have somebody you really want to work with, but finding the time to do it is really difficult.

Views of organizational relationships. When asked to describe organizational relationships, McCloskey focused on her support of teacher teamwork. For example:

> When I started [the principalship], I met with every grade level, and gave teachers time to plan as a grade level. For instance, in science, each grade level had the chance to work with a consultant alone together to try and build teams.
>
> My first year we had a lot of collaboration time, which I think is crucial. We did a lot of bonding activities and tried to communicate. I also have a leadership team and technology team. Our decisions are group decisions. It has to come from within, a lot of the decisions you make. It's important to build relationships by communicating. I think the more people know what's going on, the better it is.

McCloskey expressed her belief that organizational relationships arise from effective decision-making that "has to build 'up,'" as opposed to coming from "the top down."

Conditions and ability to enact organizational change and improvement. McCloskey described the first steps she led the staff through to enact the organizational change from traditional public school to a STEM school:

So [the teachers and I] sat down as a staff and we said we're going to push math and science. We did a whole visionary thing. We envisioned and then put together an action plan. We said, "This is where we are, and this is where we're going to be in the first year, and this is where we'll be the second year." And I told the teachers that this first year you can muck around with it. I won't be evaluating you on science because I want you to muck around. It's going to be messy. But I want you to do it, commit to it, knowing that it's not going be perfect. And I want you to say to yourself, "I'm hanging in there." And then you talk about it with [your colleagues], reflect on it, and then you change.

Pointing out the cyclical nature of school improvement, McCloskey highlighted the role of making, accepting, and learning from mistakes, in bringing about organizational change:

So that's to me a way to bring changes by having that freedom—by giving yourself a chance to make mistakes. But you're going to have to expect mistakes, and you're going to learn from those mistakes and say, "Okay, I can do it better." It's a cycle.

McCloskey described her expectations for plan implementation, which involved visual evidence of science instruction in "every single classroom":

You would see science everywhere [in the classroom]: you would see science on bulletin boards, and science journals. And kids would be able to tell you about it. You would ask them questions and they would think they're scientists.

In another example of enacting organizational change, McCloskey directed teachers to not "teach to the test. She explained that, due to their Program Improvement

status, the previous administrator at Lincoln directed teachers to focus heavily on teaching test-taking skills. As a result, teachers frequently delivered instruction and assigned tasks that mirrored the format of the California State Standard tests. The switch to focusing instruction on science and away from the test, she explained, was a "hard" choice for some teachers because it had been the focus for many years. However, she continued, "we committed ourselves to really teaching science. You make it a priority—either you commit to science or you continue teaching to the test."

Constraints and supports. When asked to describe facilitators and constraints in her efforts to create organizational improvement, one of the major constraints was an "undercurrent" on the part of a small number of teachers that the principal was seen in a negative light. Such negativity, McCloskey felt, "sent a snowball that brought out wounds" that made her efforts more difficult. She also viewed the district's lack of support as a constraint. She felt the district did not offer the support necessary to combat the undercurrent of negativity. She explained:

> The district needs to support new principals. It's crucial. There's so many parts to this job, so many parts, that when you stumble you need to know that somebody has your back—always. If you don't have the support you need, you can't do this job when things get tough.

Another major constraint was the lack of, or the efficient use of, time. According to McCloskey, "Time is an issue. It's always an issue." She noted that this constraint was related to lack of time; she would often get "called downtown" to the district office for meetings. Most important, she named the district's decision to eliminate teacher

collaboration time as a major obstacle to the successful implementation of science. She stated:

> Professional development and teacher collaboration is key. You need to be able to support teachers by giving them the time they need to be able to teach new things. The biggest constraint to me was the taking of teacher collaboration time. Teachers didn't have the time they needed to work together.

When asked about supports, McCloskey spoke of the collegial support of a group of newer principals in her district. They would often call and meet to discuss their work. She said they would "try to get together once a month, or to call each other because, usually, what you're going through, somebody else is going through the same thing."

Summary thoughts. Principal McCloskey discussed the areas in which she felt she had grown and the areas in which she felt she still struggled. In her words:

> Well you know what? I've grown. I don't mind working hard if it's something that I feel like I can make better. And I've grown a lot in my ability to deal with a lot of different things and to problem solve, and to multitask. I've grown as a leader in my ability to do things with a lot of different strands. There's so many elements: there's the parents, the administration, the teachers, the kids, the budget. I feel like I've grown in my sense of who I am. And I feel like, if anything, what I've been able to do is to model who I am.
>
> On the other hand, you're expected to know and do all these things. And you don't have anybody [else] so you're in a very vulnerable position a lot of the time. I think there's a part of me that . . . I'm not a good enough fighter. I have a hard time with the negativity, and so when it gets to the point where I feel like my

> job becomes a negative, I don't like it. This job takes being tough, too, and I might not be tough enough. I'm tough in a lot of ways: I'm smart, and I can problem solve, but I may not be tough enough. That's probably the biggest struggle.

She added, "Everything in this job is about making decision—-and you aren't always going to be right."

Case Study A: Teacher Interviews

Two teachers from Lincoln Elementary were interviewed at separate times. Both teachers were veteran teachers, each with at least 17 years of teaching experience. Both worked with McCloskey in her first 2 years as a principal.

Teacher A: Linda Collins. At the time of the interview, Collins had just completed her fourth year as a teacher at Lincoln School. Prior to coming to Lincoln, she taught at another school in the district for 13 years. In describing how the staff worked to solve problems of practice during times of change, Collins stated that the staff was composed of dedicated teachers who were "lifelong learners" who enthusiastically embraced the new changes, including piloting the science curriculum. She noted that, "With the new science pilot, our staff really stepped up their game, rolled up their sleeves and jumped in."

In terms of the change in leadership, Collins reported that the staff responded differently. When asked how the staff adjusted to the change in leadership, she noted that the prior principal had "presence, and a very strong rapport with parents." She expressed the concerns of staff and parents upon McCloskey's arrival at the school.

> When Leah came to our school, there was already a preconceived notion because she came from a more affluent school [as a teacher]. Many staff members and parents felt that she didn't have the familiarity with Title 1 students, particularly Hispanic students, to take the helm. And in a way, this became sort of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Collins shared her view that the staff was "quick to point the finger," and that McCloskey "did not receive a fair amount of support." However, she also questioned whether McCloskey wasn't "tough enough" with students. In one example, she worked with the principal to create a discipline policy. The policy was not fully implemented, in Collins's perception because McCloskey hesitated to directly "assert her authority."

She went on to describe McCloskey: "When she first came, she tried to be so kind and [a friend to everyone]. Then she tried to establish rules. [The staff] weren't willing to accept her authority. She didn't have [that] assertiveness." But Collins added, "I don't think we did enough to work together to support Principal McCloskey."

Teacher B: Kerry Ross. As a teacher who spent her 20 years as an educator at Lincoln, Ross had seen several leadership changes. In the same year that McCloskey became principal, Lincoln was designated a STEM school, receiving extensive training in teaching science. When asked how the staff solved problems during that time of change in leadership and focus, Ross explained that during the first year of McCloskey's placement, the staff was "very cohesive and had a lot of energy and enthusiasm about science." Herself a teacher with a passion for science, she described the "high" that teachers were on, with the district support of professional development around science:

> It was a fresh start for us. People missed [the former principal], but we had our new administrator saying, let's move forward, let's be fresh. It really felt like science was a way to start adopting some of the new Common Core Standards practices.

Ross pointed out that within that first year, McCloskey also refined the schedule to better accommodate the built-in collaboration that had been put in place by the prior principal. She also described that McCloskey was collaborative, and would "bounce ideas off me instead of just ask for input or provide feedback." She also found McCloskey to be "highly supportive of the on-site professional development," because she could "see the value of it."

Within McCloskey's second year as principal, however, Ms. Ross noted a change in many of the staff's perception of the new leadership. She explained:

> People didn't necessarily have a clear sense of what our school vision might be. [Before Principal McCloskey] if you would have asked me, I knew what the vision was. And now, if people were to ask what our mission is—other than science—I couldn't articulate that.

Ross explained further:

> Teachers were frustrated with communication, which I think is key. And we were receiving solid training; we examined where we were [in terms of science instruction], and what it should look like when we get started. But we had never really went back and looked at where we are after a year of implementation, or what it looked like in terms of language development . . . or even the number of days teachers are actually teaching. We just didn't beyond the beginning steps.

Several retirements added another change to Lincoln in the first year of McCloskey's principalship. Ross saw this "time-consuming" for the new principal, who was charged with supervising and evaluating a large number of nontenured teachers. This compounded Ross's major complaint: that Principal McCloskey was not in classrooms enough.

> I don't think [Principal McCloskey] was in the classroom enough. I think you need to set a time to be present for a variety of reasons, especially for the students. As the administrator you need to know what's going on, to ask yourself, is the instruction in this classroom consistent with what we've outlined as student objectives and outcomes?

Case Study B: Principal Myra O'Hare, Buena Fortuna Elementary

Background and preparation. Principal O'Hare was also in her second year as a principal when I interviewed her in spring 2014. Before becoming a principal, O'Hare experienced a wide variety of teaching experiences over a 15-year span, from teaching English in seventh grade to teaching multiple years in kindergarten. From early on in her teaching career, she embraced leadership opportunities as they arose. Her decision to become a principal naturally followed years of assuming a more extensive leadership role on her school sites. However, she fondly remembered her role as teacher:

> I guess I just loved teaching. I never was someone who wanted to leave the classroom, even when I made the decision to move over [to administration]. Even now, my little fantasy once a week is to have my own class again. I'm not one who came into administration because I was done with teaching.

Although O'Hare entertained the thought of returning to her teaching role, she also described herself as a "big picture person." She explained that, "it's hard for me to turn off that [teaching role and] look at the bigger picture." She described many of her leadership roles while in a teaching position as being "behind the scenes organizational stuff such as writing staff agendas. In one of her many teacher-leader experiences, she wrote and developed a school improvement plan that involved extensive analysis and interpretation of data. To her, this exercise felt like something that was a perfect fit for her big picture thinking and her strength in organizing.

After obtaining her administrative credential at Fielding Graduate Institute, she moved to a school in which she assumed the role of principal designee. This role, which is designed to maintain the presence of an administrator in charge when the principal is off site, became what O'Hare described as an "unofficial assistant principal position." She found herself working in this capacity on a regular basis, regardless of the presence or absence of the principal. Feeling prepared for the principalship easily followed. In her words:

> As a second-year principal, I never feel stressed that I don't know what I'm doing. I feel well prepared. There are definitely always new things, and I still have several years out before I feel like I've got this down. But I feel like I'm well prepared and in the right starting place.

When asked to describe her priorities in her role as principal, O'Hare stated her primary focus as being first and foremost the safety of the students on her campus. Her secondary focus was instructional leadership. She also stated that instructional leadership was the "ultimate goal." She explained:

> My most important role is to ensure that systems and structures are in place to allow kids to function on campus and be happy and be able to get along with each other. That positive discipline component—with transitions and schedules—all that has to happen so that we can get down to the business of learning.

With a positive school climate and safety, along with instructional leadership as her two priorities, O'Hare felt she and her staff were well prepared for the instructional shifts currently taking place on the state and district level.

Views of instructional leadership: Shifts in the school and supporting teaching and learning. O'Hare described the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as being one major shift that affected her role in supporting teaching and learning. As a result of the change in standards, teachers were required by the district to implement instructional strategies that supported the standards. A second major shift was the increased focus on collecting and analyzing data to inform instruction. O'Hare noted several times the strength of her staff to take on any new instructional shift with professionalism and expertise. Her role in the emphasis on collecting and analyzing data, she explained, was one of facilitator and manager.

> I'm doing facilitated leadership around data analysis as well as the logistical management of the data. Next year I have plans to share this capacity. But I think we've come a long way this year on looking at data because I was able to manipulate it myself and figure it out. I wouldn't have been able to get us where we are if I had left this [solely] to the teachers. I wanted to ease the burden for teachers this year. Next year I want teachers to be able to analyze their own data.

O'Hare also described her instructional role as one of facilitator, especially around the use of such data as student achievement test scores. She explained the importance of data collection and analysis in changing instruction, which acts as a catalyst to improving student achievement:

> Our [student achievement] data shows that if we keep doing the same thing, getting the same results, then we would have about 60% of students on grade level—which is great for 60% of our kids. But we still have 40% who wouldn't be. So if we want to lessen the percent that aren't on grade level, and increase the percentage of students who are, then we have to do something different.

Description of roles, responsibilities, priorities. In describing her roles as a principal, O'Hare highlighted two: her management role and her instructional leadership role. She stressed the importance of both, but the vital need to focus on the latter. In her words:

> The management role is getting the stuff done that keeps your school alive every day. I mean you have to do these those things. The instructional leadership is what's going to make gains for students. That's going to be where all the success around student sense of personal ability and confidence is going to come from. That's where teacher capacity building is going to come from. And that's where ultimately your student success is going to come from. And so without a focus on instructional leadership, we're just going to keep doing the same thing.

Views of teacher supervision and evaluation. When asked about supervision and evaluation specifically, O'Hare described a system of "layers" of observation, feedback, and support. The first layer involves "seeing what's happening—and what's

not happening—in the classroom." In the second layer, O'Hare provided feedback to the teachers regarding these observations, or "letting teachers know." Third, her "role is to provide a pathway for teachers to build their capacity." And finally, "it is still on the teacher to integrate the work." She continued:

> If I've provided the resources and the conversation, and removed the obstacles to make good instruction happen . . . and perhaps provided time to meet with a colleague, to go observe or be observed . . . and they still choose not to improve, then I become the supervisor, going in and checking boxes, and making sure the work is being done.

In order to do this successfully, O'Hare explained that her first priority is building a "level of relationship between admin and the teachers that you're working with." She feels more confident to supervise and evaluate teachers in her second year as opposed to her first year as principal, because, she explained, "I know the teachers and what makes them tick and what their personal needs are." She described the differences between supervising and evaluating new and veteran teachers:

> Veteran teachers and new teachers have different needs. [For example], a 20-year veteran may not see that the career has changed, and I have to be clear with them about what the new expectations and demands are. For new teachers, they have the potential, but not the knowledge. So it's connecting them with resources and helping them build relationships with their partners.

When asked what supported or constrained her ability to effectively supervise and evaluate teachers, O'Hare stated that the lack of time was the "hardest thing." She

explained that each "layer" of her observation, feedback, and support system took time to execute.

> We know through [John] Hattie's work that feedback is a huge component of student learning. It's the same for teachers. And I have to have the time to be in and working with the teachers. That's what's going to move us all in the right direction. I think time is the hugest piece because I have the knowledge of what needs to be done, but I can't do it all. You just can't do it all.

Views of organizational relationships. In O'Hare's discussion of organizational relationships, she described her method of solving systemic issues that may affect organizational relationships. She explained:

> There's a system for everything that we can fix, and it's just a matter of finding what that system is. We need to break the issue down to what is driving it. Whether it's a system in place that we need to fix.

O'Hare added that, in order to maintain organizational relationships, she relied on her "style of transparency and clarity." Using the example of grade-level scheduling, she continued:

> I try to be clear and transparent in the decision-making process, and I give everybody the opportunity to provide input. I don't anticipate [that] everyone's going to be happy with every decision. I have to let go of happiness as a necessity in decision-making. So while not everyone is going to get the choice they wanted they can count on a fair process.

Although she cited frequent one-to-one communication as something teachers and staff most want from her, she pointed to not having enough time as the culprit in making

this form of communication difficult. She discussed how she tried to address the issue of time:

> Hands down, if I can meet face-to-face and talk with people, that's the best way to communicate, but there's just fundamentally not enough time in the school week for me to do that. I try to do enough ways to have everyone give input. I communicate in bulletins and emails. If you don't read an email or staff bulletin thoroughly, and you're frustrated with me over a decision you say you didn't know about . . . well, I can't own that. I have to let that go because I'm not going to be able to tell everyone personally everything that's coming along.

In addition, O'Hare said she used staff meetings to communicate initiatives such as the increased use of data to guide instruction, and to hear from teachers how they were implementing these initiatives.

Conditions and ability to enact organizational change and improvement. In her first year as principal at Buena Fortuna, the school was designated as a Program Improvement school. (A school is designated as Program Improvement when it fails to meet Adequate Yearly Progress as determined by the federal and state targets.) O'Hare described this designation as an opportunity that "forced the issue to have us take a look at the whole school more thoroughly." As a result, she and the teachers were required to complete the state Academic Program Survey, which revealed the absence of a viable student achievement data system through which to monitor student progress. Bolstered by the survey data, and the imposed sanctions from the federal and state, O'Hare was able to effectively communicate the importance of a strong data system and culture to her

teaching staff as "fundamental to our goal of getting more kids on grade level." She explained:

> Being in Program Improvement lends the sense of urgency to the fact that teachers do need to make these changes. I've shared a lot at staff meeting that it's all about looking at the data to determine where it's working and where it's not, and then putting things in place to make that happen. In terms of organizational change, I'd say it just comes down to those same components of soliciting input from [teachers], and making priorities clear.

During staff meetings, O'Hare indicated that she frequently asked the question, "What are we currently doing, and where do we go next?" She set the expectation that teachers in grade-level teams share their progress with the entire teaching staff. In this way, she was able to assess her teachers' progress on the path to improvement by the manner in which they communicate.

O'Hare shared her process in implementing her system of data analysis, which included selecting an assessment instrument, and gathering and inputting data.

> Our first staff meetings were about determining what assessments were being used at each grade level. From that I saw that a measure of fluency was absent. So I imposed the use of a school-wide fluency assessment. To get this off the ground, I knew I had to make it as easy as possible for the teachers. So I was willing to do half the work. I collected and inputted all the data for the school. That was 20 data points four times this year. I think having me do that has helped move us along very quickly. It took a lot of time, but, looking back, it was worth it.

O'Hare also worked with teachers to build capacity in setting academic goals for students, revisiting these goals, and adjusting goals as needed. Along with goal setting, grade levels regularly discussed how to adjust instruction to meet student goals.

Constraints and supports. When asked to discuss supports and constraints, O'Hare identified one overarching support and one overarching constraint. Throughout the interview, O'Hare pointed to the lack of sufficient time as being the major constraint in many aspects of her job. For example, she spoke of time constraints hampering supervising and evaluating teachers, and making communicating effectively with personnel difficult. When asked specifically about constraints, she further described how insufficient time affects her both professionally and personally.

> I'm aware that the level of intense work I'm personally doing is something I can't survive. I have buy-in [from my teachers], we have a plan, but I can't do all the pieces. So my biggest goal for next year is "How do I build capacity [in my teachers] for things like data collection so I'm not doing it all myself?" I don't have time to do the things that people should do to maintain a balance, like exercise and take care of myself. This may be reasonable to do in the first couple years, but it is not reasonable to continue—-so I'm aware of that.

O'Hare perceived insufficient time as an obstacle in enacting her vision of creating a strong data culture, one she saw only being sustainable by building teacher capacity around managing data.

She indicated personnel as her main support. More specifically, she pointed to district administration, her principal colleagues, and her office manager:

> I feel very lucky that there's a lot of people with a high level of expertise at the district level that I feel I can go to, depending on what the issue is. And when I want a heads up on how to do something, or want to bounce ideas around, there's the principals. Also, having a good office manager makes it possible for me to do my job. [The office manager] keeps me in line, and she takes care of deadlines.

Summary thoughts. Principal O'Hare discussed the areas in which she felt she had grown and the areas in which she felt she still struggled. When discussing her own areas of growth she mentioned that, "on one hand, it feels like I'm able to do everything. But on the other hand, everything feels like a growth point." She stressed the need to "figure out what to prioritize and know what to let go," and, "not to jump in and do everything." She continued:

> I know my next step is developing distributed leadership, and the capacity of how that works is a challenge for me. It can't always be me doing stuff. I love my job—and I can't do it this way forever.

Case Study B: Teacher Interviews

Two teachers from Buena Fortuna Elementary were interviewed at separate times. Teacher C, Tara Brennan, was a veteran teacher with 21 years of teaching experience at the time of the interview. Teacher D, Mary Smith, had just completed her eighth year of teaching at the time of her interview. Both worked with the former principal of Buena Fortuna, and both worked with Principal O'Hare in her first 2 years as a principal. Both teachers attended the County Education Office PASC program, and received their preliminary administrative services credentials.

Teacher C: Tara Brennan. At the time of her interview, Brennan was in her 21st year as a classroom teacher at Buena Fortuna. She had recently accepted a district-level position as a "Teacher on Special Assignment" (TOSA) for the upcoming year. Over the course of her teaching years, she had taken on many leadership roles at the school site, including site coordinator for student teachers and school site council member.

Brennan stated that Buena Fortuna teaching staff "had unity and a shared vision" and were "very collaborative." She further described the staff as "not afraid of hard work" and one that "cares about the population, and wants our kids to succeed." She credited the former principal with pulling the staff together in a time of crisis, which she described as the first time the school had received the Program Improvement status. (Note: Buena Fortuna had been in and out of Program Improvement between 2006 and 2013, before Principal O'Hare had taken over the position. Their current status of Program Improvement is the second time the school has received the rating.)

In terms of how the school was affected by the change in leadership, Brennan noted that Principal O'Hare allowed the staff to maintain its level of effectiveness without changing the good practices that had already been established. One change that came with the new leadership was an increased focus on student data analysis to measure the school's effectiveness. She stated that O'Hare's main strength is her ability to look at data, and pointed out that the Buena Fortuna staff had, "looked at data more with her than any other principal." She continued:

> She came into this ship that was on a good trajectory. We felt good about what we were doing. So a lot of what she did, in my opinion correctly, was just to let status quo maintain status quo. We were doing the right things, and [Principal O'Hare]

had her own input by having us look at the data a little more closely, at what we could be doing differently.

When asked how the staff worked to solve problems of practice during times of change, Brennan shared an example in which the principal introduced new procedures for identifying students who were struggling academically. Teachers were instructed to meet in data teams, and use student achievement data to pinpoint needs. From her perspective, there was " a lot of resistance" from teachers because it required more time and responsibility of the teaching staff. She observed the principal "work through the resistance," and noted that the staff eventually became accustomed to the "new way of doing things." O'Hare also scheduled in time for implementation within the workday, which, according to Brennan alleviated much of the resistance teachers were expressing regarding the new process.

In closing, Brennan emphasized Principal O'Hare's major contribution to the staff as her focus on data.

> I hate to make [Principal O'Hare] to sound like she's all about the numbers, but I really feel that this is the focus she has. It's a gift that she has given to us, and that you can really feel good about the decisions you're making when you feel like you have some data to support those decisions.

Brennan shared that O'Hare was supportive in giving her opportunities to grow her leadership capacity. One example was that she encouraged Brennan to attend professional development in her areas of interest, and then provided her with the means to share her learning with the staff.

Teacher D: Mary Smith. Smith had just finished her eighth year of teaching at the time of the interview. She has spent her 8 years teaching different grade levels at Buena Fortuna. She described the Buena Fortuna staff as "devoted to the students," "collaborative," and willing to "embrace new practices."

When asked how the staff worked to solve problems of practice during times of change, Smith used the example of the loss of collaboration time in the previous year. Collaboration time had been a key element in effective planning and communication within grade-level teams. Smith felt that this was a detriment to her ability to "plan or reflect on lessons or look at assessment results more deeply." She explained how O'Hare discussed the loss of collaborative time at school site council, and created a staff survey to identify ways in which the staff schedule could be altered to reintroduce collaboration time.

In terms of how the school was affected by the change in leadership, Smith pointed to O'Hare's emphasis on using student assessment data to bring about organizational improvement.

> One of the biggest new focuses brought about by [Principal O'Hare] was focusing on data, making sure we're using various assessments to record student growth, and then putting it all together to get a clear picture of how we're doing. Since we work well together as teachers and communicate a lot, this is a really good practice if we need to improve academically.

Smith discussed the complexity of the school, which she felt added to the demands on the principal's time. She discussed shared leadership, a resource she felt was underutilized at Buena Fortuna.

> We have a very big school and a very busy principal. So getting others to help out as much as you can I think is important. I think getting others to help could be utilized more, just because there are so many capable teachers at [our] school.

As in the case of Brennan, Smith also shared that O'Hare encouraged her to grow her leadership capacity in areas that she was passionate about. For instance, O'Hare supported Smith's training on using iPads in the classroom, then supported her in developing staff trainings based on Smith's developing knowledge.

Similarities and Differences Between the Principal Cases

Several similarities and differences were evident between the two novice principals in the two sites under study. Initially, similarities and differences are discussed, beginning with perspectives about principals' preparation for the role. Mental models and self-efficacy for each principal are discussed in the following section.

Similarities

First, both leaders were experienced teachers who had assumed multiple leadership roles in the past as school site teacher leaders. Over her 25+ years as a teacher, McCloskey described herself as having taken on "a lot of leadership roles." O'Hare said that while a teacher she also embraced leadership opportunities as they arose. These opportunities included developing a school improvement plan that involved the analysis and interpretation of data. In addition, both principals valued their previous teaching roles, with O'Hare saying, "I was not one who came into administration because I was done with teaching."

Second, both principals characterized their leadership preparation as being adequate, while also acknowledging the difficulty of leading in their new positions.

According to McCloskey, her PASC program prepared her for the role. Yet she also described the job as a "lot to take on," sometimes leaving her feeling "numb." O'Hare also described herself as feeling "well prepared," but that there were "definitely always new things, and I still have several years out before I feel like I've got this down."

Third, both principals drew a distinction between their roles in management and in instructional leadership. McCloskey, for example, identified management as focused on keeping the school safe while to O'Hare the management role involved "getting the stuff done that keeps your school alive every day." To McCloskey, instructional leadership focused on such things as keeping staff meetings focused on teaching and learning, her being in "classrooms a lot," and her ensuring that teacher professional development happened. O'Hare's instructional leadership was directed at making " gains for students" as well as creating "teacher capacity building."

A fourth similarity was that both novice principals talked about having enthusiastic teaching staffs at their sites that were ready to move forward and were receptive to organizational change initiatives. For example, McCloskey described her staff as an "amazing" group of teachers who were willing to "try new things." O'Hare described teachers in the school as "hard workers" who were "learners themselves." She also mentioned the strength of her staff to take on new instructional initiatives with professionalism and expertise.

A final similarity was that both principals named time as their major constraint, especially in terms of their ability the time spent as a manager, and the time spent as an instructional leader. McCloskey explained how "time gets caught up with the managerial part," leaving less time to focus on being the instructional leader. She described the time

spent on the managerial as opposed to time spent on the instructional roles as the "conflict that every principal [faces]." O'Hare shared frustration about not having the time to coach teachers and provide the instructional feedback to teachers, which she described as, "a huge component in improvement teaching and learning."

Differences

Several differences between the two leaders were also apparent from the interviews. The first was in the area of district support each experienced. O'Hare said that she experienced a high degree of such support, noting that she felt "lucky [to have] a lot of people with a high level of expertise at the district level that I feel I can go to, depending on what the issue is." McCloskey, however, noted the district's decision to eliminate teacher collaboration time as a constraint, as well as a lack of support when "negativity" emerged from a small number of teachers. Yet she also noted the district had provided professional development to support teachers' ongoing professional development in science.

Second, the principals differed in their experiences teaching or administering previously in schools with diverse student populations. McCloskey taught primarily at a school with a high socioeconomic status and little diversity; O'Hare taught at both an affluent school with little diversity, and a highly diverse, high-poverty school.

Third, the two principals differed in their descriptions of their role as supervisor. One (McCloskey) tended to focus on her own personal role as coach ("I think it comes from years of being a teacher that I see myself as coach"), and the other (O'Hare) on her role as facilitator of the system as a whole, by layering observation and feedback.

A fourth difference dealt with O'Hare's perception that she was able to legitimize

and implement change within the school, which contrasted with McCloskey's less than positive assessment of being able to bring about certain changes. McCloskey, while speaking positively about a commitment to change in the teaching of science, also said that she experienced difficulty in a "snowball" on the part of some teachers that brought "negativity" and made change efforts more difficult. She felt positively about bringing about change by giving herself and others a "chance to make mistakes" and then learn from them. However, she said that she also experienced difficulty with being in a "vulnerable position" when she experienced negativity from others in the school. "When it gets to the point where I feel like my job becomes a negative, I don't like it . . . I might not be tough enough."

O'Hare talked about bringing about change in largely positive terms. She spoke, for example, about sharing "a lot at staff meetings . . . looking at the data to determine where [change] is working and where it's not, and then putting things in place to make [change] happen." She added, "In terms of organizational change, I'd say it just comes down to those same components of soliciting input . . . and making priorities clear."

The following section delves further into possible similarities and contrasts between the principals by revisiting the study concepts of mental models and leader self-efficacy. More specifically, the section compares the relationship between mental models and leader self-efficacy in enacting organizational improvement.

Mental Models and Leader Self-Efficacy

As discussed in Chapter 2, Martinez-Kellar (2012) utilized her case studies of two high school principals to draw a number of conclusions about concepts related to a principal's orientation to organizational transformation and change. Three of these

concepts were mental models, creativity, and leader self-efficacy. In this section, the focus is on two of these concepts: mental models and leader self-efficacy, discussing them in relation to the two novice principals in this study. The assumption suggested by Martinez-Kellar appeared to be that the more appropriate the mental model, and the higher the efficacy, the more capable the leader is at bringing about organizational and transformational change (particularly if there are also low immunities to change). Mental models and self-efficacy were chosen because these appear particularly important for novices who are gaining skills and experience.

Mental Models

As evident from the interviews with the leaders and teachers, the mental models for Principal McCloskey can be identified as *Principal as instructional leader*, *Principal as problem solver*, *Principal as teacher leader and supporter*, and *Principal ensures equity for students*.

Throughout the interview, McCloskey's description of her work suggested a mental model of *Principal as instructional leader*. This inference was made because she described her role in instructional leadership by referring to maximizing time for instructional leadership by initiating a change in staff meetings to keep them focused on teaching and learning. Further, she distributed weekly letters with any business items that needed to be addressed, thus freeing up time to "share engagement and strategies and talk about instructional issues." Her descriptions also suggested a mental model of *Principal as problem solver* when she talked about her orientation as a problem solver. She defined role of educational leader as being the "problem solver and a support for teachers" as

well as her belief that everyone in the school should "believe in what they do and believe [in themselves] as a learner."

The mental model *Principal as teacher leader and supporter* was suggested in her discussion regarding the changes she made that helped support teachers. She stressed the changes she made to faculty meetings, and teacher planning and collaboration time. She explained how she worked with scheduling to create more time for teachers to "plan and learn the new science curriculum." Additionally, she viewed herself as a coach who wanted "people to succeed."

When asked to describe her priorities, a mental model of *Principal ensures equity for students* was inferred. She stressed "equity," "high expectations for everybody," and a "learning" orientation—themes she revisited when discussing her school becoming a pilot school for science instruction.

O'Hare's descriptions of her work and perspectives suggested mental models that could be characterized as *Principal as systems leader, Principal as instructional facilitator, Principal creates and maintains positive school climate,* and *Principal collects and manages data for improving instruction.*

O'Hare made several references to creating and maintaining effective systems, including when discussing student discipline, creating and maintaining a positive school climate, and teacher evaluation and supervision. For instance, she described creating a supervision and evaluation as a system of "layers" of observation, feedback, and support. Also figuring prominently in her mental model of *Principal as systems leader* was her description of her role in making data collection and analysis the cornerstone of organizational improvement. In her mental model as *Systems leader*, McCloskey

described data collection and analysis as a system in itself, creating the conditions to positively affect instructional change, which, in turn, would bring about improved student achievement.

Although related, the mental model of *Principal collects and manages data for improving instruction* was an important stand-alone mental model for O'Hare. She referred to having introduced a culture of data analysis to the staff, of creating a system of managing data that would facilitate easier access for teachers in analyzing the data, and she identified her and her teachers' work around data as the single most important factor in bringing about organizational change. In addition, this mental model played out in real time according to one teacher interviewee, who described one of O'Hare's more effective roles at the school as being her focus on student assessment data to bring about student achievement.

A third mental model, *Leader who creates and maintains a safe and positive school climate,* was suggested by O'Hare's description of school climate as at the "foundational level" and, therefore, essential to student achievement. For her, positive discipline, both school-wide and in individual classrooms, contributing to a school climate in which students feel safe, have to be in place before students can "get down to the business of learning."

The three aforementioned mental models appeared to be building blocks for a fourth mental model: *Principal as instructional facilitator*. In this mental model, O'Hare described creating the structures and systems in place to allow for teachers to grow their practice. She envisioned her role as creating a level playing field for her teaching staff, where teachers have a "commonality in their level of capacity," which she fostered

through identifying what instructional practices need to be improved, providing collective professional development experiences, facilitating collaborative conversations around best practices, and providing the supports that individual teachers may need depending upon their individual capacity. This mental model was supported in teacher interviews: Both teachers described how O'Hare supported them through providing time and resources with which to pursue specific areas of interest.

Self-Efficacy

A comparison of perceived leadership self-efficacy was examined in the context of the principals' perceived mental models and, more specifically, in the context of perceptions of effectiveness in their roles as teacher supervisor and evaluator. As noted in Chapter 1, in discussing his theory of self-efficacy, Bandura (1977), described it as, "a conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce given outcomes . . . the strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with given situations" (p. 3). Kellar and Slayton defined *leader self-efficacy* as "the level of confidence a leader has in her ability to lead her organizational members effectively based on her perceived knowledge, skills, and attributes" (Machida & Schaubroeck as cited in Kellar & Slayton, 2013, pp. 11-12).

In examining McCloskey's level of leader self-efficacy in relation to her mental models, there were examples of disconnect between her "deeply ingrained assumptions" (Senge's mental models), and "her conviction that she can execute" (Bandura's self-efficacy). As *Principal as teacher leader and supporter* and *Principal as instructional leader,* she felt efficacious when describing these mental models as providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate and grow their knowledge of science curriculum.

However, she expressed fairly limited leader *self-efficacy* in terms of teacher supervision and evaluation. She described teacher evaluation as "hard," preferring to be a coach and not an evaluator. In teacher interviews, one teacher expressed frustration that the principal was not spending sufficient time in the classrooms supervising instruction.

When examining the relationship between McCloskey's mental model of *Principal as problem solver* and her level of leader self-efficacy, McCloskey was successful in identifying and solving a problem of instructional emphasis. The former principal encouraged teachers to emphasize test-taking practice in daily instruction, whereas McCloskey shifted the instructional focus to science instruction in order to fully implement science program. Recognizing that there would not be time for both, McCloskey moved her staff from what she identified as an outdated practice to one that would propel them forward. In both teacher interviews, McCloskey's emphasis on science instruction, and elimination of test-taking practices, was discussed.

Comparing another mental model, *Principal as ensuring equity for students*, to leader self-efficacy revealed inconsistencies between principals' perceptions of equity and teacher perceptions of practice. For example, McCloskey discussed the desire to "take on a school of challenge" and to "equalize opportunity for all kids." According to teacher comments, because McCloskey lacked experience teaching and leading at high-poverty, ethnically diverse schools, her "knowledgeable and familiarity" with Title 1 schools was open to question. One teacher also discussed that over the 2 years of McCloskey's principalship, the practice of looking at data to identify student needs was eliminated. This practice, which was subsumed by the emphasis on science instruction, had been seen as effective in providing the support students needed to grow

academically.

When examining the relationship between O'Hare's leader self-efficacy and three previously-identified mental models—*Principal as systems leader, Principal collects and manages data for improving instruction,* and *Principal as instructional facilitator*—O'Hare's descriptions suggested these contributed to a high level of self-efficacy. Moreover, observations and interview responses suggested that effective organizational change was a likely outcome of enacting the mental models under which O'Hare operated.

In one example, classroom walkthroughs revealed classroom data visibly displayed and student learning goals posted. One teacher was observed explaining to her students that the lesson objective was directly related to their results on a particular assessment, which revealed an area of difficulty for the majority of them. This example suggested that O'Hare's mental model *Principal collects and manages data for improving instruction* was enacted instructionally, creating the change she envisioned for her teachers. Responses during O'Hare's interview, along with observed practice in the classroom, suggested that the relationship between a high level of self-efficacy and her mental models created the conditions for organizational improvement.

When examining the intersection between leader self-efficacy and O'Hare's mental model *Principal as instructional facilitator*, changes in practice, such as mentioned above, may also suggest a positive relationship between O'Hare's high level of self-efficacy and mental models. Teacher interview responses suggested the possibility of a positive relationship resulting in enacting her mental model: For example, one teacher stated that O'Hare tried to "make sure everyone received some sort of new

training throughout the year." O'Hare described how she matched up teachers with support or helped them set their own goals, and then provided feedback around those specific goals.

The relationship between leader self-efficacy and the mental model, *Principal creates systems to promote a safe and positive school climate*, also revealed a high level of self-efficacy. O'Hare described putting considerable time into "creating a safe environment" for students. One teacher spoke of O'Hare's effective implementation of a playground program that focused on the social-emotional growth of the students during recess.

When comparing leader self-efficacy and *Principal as systems leader,* O'Hare's comments specifically suggested this mental model when discussing teacher supervision and evaluation. She described the "layers" of supervision and evaluation that began with a system of building teacher relationships, identifying needs, providing instructional feedback and, ultimately, providing evaluative feedback. She expressed a high level of leader self-efficacy with evaluating and supervising teachers designated as *unsatisfactory* (an *unsatisfactory* teacher is one who has received a certain number of unsatisfactory ratings on a series of evaluations administered by the principal), due to the fact that her teaching assignment prior to becoming a principal was as nonevaluative support for unsatisfactory teachers. She also expressed confidence in supervising and evaluating her teaching staff as a whole, and felt that, especially in her second year as principal, she had built strong relationships with the teachers and knew what made them "tick." She described herself as following her systematic approach of providing the resources, and the feedback, removing the obstacles to allow for instructional improvement, and

providing time to meet and observe colleagues. After these steps have been taken, "it's on the teacher to make it happen. That's when the evaluative piece comes in."

In comparing the two principals' levels of leader self-efficacy and their mental models, principal perceptions and teacher interviews were analyzed to reveal the extent to which a mental model and leader self-efficacy worked in tandem, or at odds, to create the desired organizational effect. Both principals shared mental models of instructional leadership (McCloskey's *Principal as instructional leader* and O'Hare's *Principal as instructional facilitator*). Both principals expressed a high level of self-efficacy in their enactment of creating teacher collaboration time, and facilitating individual teacher growth through providing professional development. These mental models were corroborated by the teacher interviews from both sites, which cited their principal's efforts to change schedules to create more time for teacher collaborations. A difference between the relationship between the two mental models and leader self-efficacy was uncovered in the aspect of their models that involved teacher supervision and evaluation. McCloskey described herself as "supportive and not mean," and that her tendency toward "wanting to be everybody's friend" led teachers to having a negative view of her instructional leadership, especially in terms of the time she put toward observing classroom practice. On the other hand, O'Hare stressed her competency in working with teachers who were not performing well, as well as with teachers at different levels of competency. Teacher interviews strongly suggested that her mental model matched her practice.

Table 3 is a cross-case categorization of the similarities and differences of the principals, which emerged from comparing the two principals in this study in relation to

their background, mental models, leader self-efficacy, and their enactment of organizational improvement or change.

The findings in the two case studies suggest that exploring a principal's ability to enact organizational improvement through examining the relationship between leader self-efficacy and mental models is complex and, on its own, does not conclusively reveal a clear pathway from mental and psychosocial concepts to effective enactment. Despite the complexity, this study does suggest that high leader self-efficacy, coupled with clear mental models, may work in tandem to produce organizational change and, in some cases, improvement. However, there are other factors such as external constraints and leader stress discussed in earlier chapters that may influence a leader's ability to enact organizational improvement. In the next and final chapter, I will discuss these ideas in relation to previous literature, and examine the relevance of this study in terms of its limitations and implications for principal practice and training as well as offer suggestions for future research.

Table 3

Inductive Cross-Case Categorization From Case Studies of Principal McCloskey and Principal O'Hare

	Principal McCloskey	Similarities	Principal O'Hare
Principal background	Admin credential through test Taught at low diversity, low-poverty schools	Second Year Principals Many teacher leader roles Principals of high diversity, high-poverty schools	Admin credential through test Taught at both low diversity, low-poverty, and high diversity, high-poverty schools
Mental models	1.Principal as problem solver 2.Principal as teacher leader and supporter 3.Principal ensures equity for students.	Principal as instructional leader/facilitator	1. Principal as systems leader 2. Principal creates and maintains positive school climate, and 3. Principal collects and manages data for improving instruction.
Leader's self-efficacy	Less confidence regarding supervision and evaluation	Confidence regarding problem solving High level regarding supporting teachers	Confidence regarding supervision and evaluation
Enacted organizational improvement/change	Changed the focus from test-taking instruction to science instruction	Created more collaboration time for teachers within the school day	Embedded system for data collection and analysis
Supports		Strong instructional teachers, collegial support of fellow administrators	Strong district-level support, cohesive school community
Constraints	Unsupportive district, followed a strong, beloved principal, inflexible school community (esp. families)	Time to be an instructional leader (esp. time to supervise and evaluate teachers	

Chapter 5

Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research

In this section, I will discuss the relationship of this study to previous literature, focusing on specific studies and research that influenced the direction of this dissertation. The areas I will address are principal stress and challenges, and teacher supervision and evaluation through an instructional management lens. I will discuss consistencies and contrasts with my study and previous literature, paying particular attention to Martinez-Kellar's (2012) exploration of the relationship between leader self-efficacy, mental models, immunities to change, and leader creativity. I will discuss how my study builds on previous literature.

This study explored new principals' perception of instructional leadership, including supervision and evaluation as well as views of their roles to facilitate organizational improvement. Another focal area of this study was relationship between a novice principal's perceptions of their role as site administrator and to what extent they may be supported or constrained in their ability to enact this role. It examined the connection between her mental models and level of self-efficacy and how this relationship influenced her ability to enact organizational improvement in the form of improved learning. Research questions guiding the study were:

1. What are new principals' views of instructional leadership, teacher evaluation and supervision, and organizational improvement?
2. What constrains and supports new principals in these roles?
3. What are the similarities and differences in these views across two principals?
4. To what extent do new principals' mental models and leader self-efficacy influence their ability to enact organizational improvement as suggested in Kellar and Slayton's (2013) framework?

To answer these questions, case studies evolved from interviews of two new principals at ethnically diverse, high-poverty schools. These case studies were produced following the lead of Martinez-Kellar (2012), and included leader background and preparation; views of instructional leadership; roles, responsibilities, and priorities; views of teacher supervision and evaluation; views of organizational relationships; and constraints and supports. The cross-case analysis examined each leader's mental models and leader self-efficacy as well as similarities and differences between the two principal participants. Providing context for the case studies was data collected from interviews of two teachers at each school site as well as document collection, which included demographic information and achievement data as measured by state testing instruments. To ensure that participant anonymity would be maintained, pseudonyms were used for the school sites, the principals, and the teachers.

This dissertation was organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contained the introduction, study framework, study purpose, overview of the method, study importance, and organization. Chapter 2 provided a background of related literature on principals' changing work responsibilities and stresses, supervisory and evaluation roles, and shifts in envisioning the principal role from management to organizational improvement (Kellar & Slayton, 2013). A figure from Martinez-Kellar's (2012) work was included, along with a figuring illustrating an adaptation of the model for use in this study. Chapter 3 outlined a rationale for qualitative interviewing and described an initial pilot study as well as the data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 discussed the findings of both case studies, using the adapted Martinez-Kellar (2012) framework to code for mental models and evidence of levels of leader self-efficacy. Interviews were also examined to uncover principals'

perceptions of their managerial and instructional roles as described in Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Instructional Management Framework, paying particular attention to teacher supervision and evaluation. Challenges and stressors were also discussed, with guidance from the work of DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003), Daresh (1986), Goldring and Greenfield (2004), and Peterson (1985, 2002). Another concept supported by researchers Tshannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) and Bandura (1977, 1989, 1993) was leader self-efficacy. The current chapter includes an overview of this study, with a summary of the findings and a review of research and frameworks of particular importance to this dissertation. Included is an examination of consistencies and contrasts between the current study and relevant research, and a discussion of how this study may have implications for practice and future research.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Similarities and differences were uncovered between the two principals' preparedness for the position, their views of their roles as teacher supervisor and evaluator, their levels of leader self-efficacy, and the conceptualization of the job (mental models). The current study findings on second-year principals in ethnically diverse, high-poverty schools suggested that both principals faced many challenges. These challenges included demands on their time, conflict between their roles as managers and instructional leaders, and difficulty in enacting the organizational improvement in teaching and learning required of schools facing possible sanctions as a result of not meeting federal achievement targets. Further analysis revealed both external and internal contexts: Externally, district administration was perceived by one principal as supportive, and by the other principal as undermining their work at the school site level; internally,

principals' perceptions of their leader self-efficacy, and the mental models they possessed, worked to either strengthen or diminish their ability to enact organizational improvement. The principal (O'Hare), with consistently high levels of leader self-efficacy and more defined mental models was more effective in influencing organizational change; the principal with inconsistent levels of leader self-efficacy and less defined mental models was less effective in influencing organizational change.

The following is a discussion of the studies in Chapter 2 that were particularly relevant to this study, with a discussion of similarities and differences between this study and the reviewed literature, along with possible ways in which this study builds on previous literature.

Particularly influential to this study was Martinez-Kellar's (2012) case study of two high school principals, in which she examined the intersection between the principals' mental models and their level of self-efficacy. Her findings from a comparison of the two case studies suggested that a principal's mental models were impacted by a level of leader self-efficacy, and were insufficient on their own to achieve a desired organizational change. She cited Machida and Schaubroeck's (as cited in Martinez-Kellar, 2012, p. 130) work on principals and self-efficacy, in which they posited that a leader's "own beliefs in self-efficacy influence the extent to which the leader is able to achieve organizational improvement as well as developing personally as a professional." There were similarities and differences in the results when comparing Martinez-Kellar to the current study. One similarity was the use of a qualitative methods model to collect and analyze data. A difference was found in the case studies: Martinez-Kellar (2012) explored the relationship between self-efficacy and mental models using

two high school principals for her case studies; the current study explored that relationship through case studies of two new elementary school principals, both in their second year as principal. A similarity between the two studies is articulated here by Kellar-Matinez (2012):

> While a principal possesses well-intentioned beliefs and assumptions, these are not enough to enable her to enact the kind of transformational organizational change that she not only wants, but that is also demanded of her in this increasing era of school accountability. (p. 192)

The findings from the current study also suggest that principals may articulate a vision of transformational leadership, but the reality of making it happen is more complex, especially when hampered by external (e.g., district level of support) and internal (level of leader self-efficacy) constraints. However, unlike the Martinez-Kellar (2012) study, the current study suggests that the ability to enact organizational improvement is influenced by the level of leader self-efficacy. In contrast with the findings in the Martinez-Kellar study and the current study, both principals in Martinez-Kellar displayed high levels of leader self-efficacy; in the current study, principals' levels leader self-efficacy differed: One exhibited high levels, and the other exhibited inconsistencies in her levels of leader self-efficacy. Despite high levels of leader self-efficacy, principals in Martinez-Kellar were unable to enact organizational improvement.

Martinez-Kellar's (2012) framework was influential to this study, and served as the inspiration for a modified version adapted to explore the relationship between mental models and leader self-efficacy. A difference between the two studies can be found in other areas that figured prominently in Martinez-Kellar's framework for research: the two

concepts *immunities to change* and *leader creativity*. While *immunities to change* was not explored in the current study, further examination of the findings does suggest that both participants were highly self-reflective. (In Martinez-Kellar's framework, if a principal is self-reflective is seen as the opposite of immunity to change). One principal (McCloskey) used self-reflection, whether misguidedly or accurately, to determine that the job of principal was not for her, deeming herself not enough of a "fighter" to be effective. However, this principal was able to bring about some change in her organization (i.e., test-preparation focus to a focus on science learning). This observation raises a possible contradiction, e.g. "I am not a fighter" but "I can get the organization to change." Possibly, a leader can exhibit confidence or leader self efficacy in one area and lack confidence in another (indeed, McCloskey self-reflected on both of these areas). The second principal (O'Hare) self-reflected on her inability to effectively supervise the numerous certificated tutors, or CTs (part-time teachers hired by the site) and effectively supervise and evaluate her full-time teaching staff (district-contracted teachers). She designed a system of nonevaluative supervision, giving full-time teacher leads time out of the classroom to observe and mentor the CTs. Martinez-Kellar also focused on how self-efficacy and mental models were "mediated" by a principal's immunities to change. As noted, immunities to change were described as "the underlying barriers that prevent an individual from making progress toward a desired professional goal" (Helsing, Howell, Kegan, & Lahey as cited in Martinez-Kellar, 2012, p. 6). Martinez-Kellar's findings suggested that although both of her participants held different mental models yet similar high levels of self-efficacy, they both exhibited "an immunity to be self-reflective, [which] contributed to their inability to recognize where they could improve the quality

of their practice in order to move from enacting structural organizational change to more transformative organizational change" (p. 192).

Another aspect studied in Martinez-Kellar (2012) was how the relationship between mental models, leader self-efficacy, and immunities to change influenced a leader's level of creativity to enact change. There was evidence in this study to suggest that in areas where the principals exhibited higher levels of leader self-efficacy, both principals exhibited creativity in enacting change. For McCloskey, it was in the arena of *Principal as problem solver*: Recognizing that there was not enough time in the instructional day for test-skill practice and science, she threw out the test-taking instructional focus in order to fully implement the science program. For O'Hare, it was in her mental model of *Principal collects and manages data for improving instruction*: Identifying that the staff did not use student test data to guide instruction, she collected student data for teachers to analyze, taking every opportunity to reinforce with teachers her vision of a data-driven teaching and learning culture.

Also influential to this study was Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Instructional Management Framework, in which teacher evaluation and supervision figure prominently in managing the instructional program, and is highlighted as an essential component of instructional leadership. Their groundbreaking work in creating a framework for identifying the critical job functions of principals has led to a series of studies that, over several decades, examined principal effectiveness through the lens of instructional management practices. Findings have further highlighted the conflicting managerial and instructional roles (Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Many studies have suggested that as an instructional leader practice, teacher evaluation and supervision is

not the most significant in bringing about organizational improvement (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Peterson, 2002). In fact, relatively few studies find a relationship between the principal's hands-on supervision of classroom instruction, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. Where effects have been identified, it has generally been at the elementary school level and could possibly be explained by school size. (Hallinger, 2003, pp. 333-334). In the current study, the two principals described supervision and evaluation as an important component of instructional leadership role; they also expressed frustration that, due to the managerial demands of their jobs, they were unable to dedicate the time they felt was necessary to effective supervision and evaluation.

Another area of study for researchers is the principal stress, which has been conceptualized in many ways. In Chapter 2, I emphasized the conflicting pressures that come with leading the learning versus managing the school site. In this study, both principals mentioned this conflict. Further research of relevance to this study regarding principal stress included that of Daresh (1986) who studied the challenges facing beginning principals. Data indicated that role clarification and job expertise were also areas of concern. In regard to role clarification, novice principals questioned their own decisions to become principals, noting a discrepancy between the perceived job and the actual job. They also struggled with their new position of authority and leadership, and experienced levels of anxiety over evaluating teachers. There were similarities between Daresh's research and the current study. First, both principals noted a discrepancy between the perception of being a principal, and the realities of the role on the ground. They expressed being prepared for some aspects, while at the same time being

unprepared for others. Both described feeling at times overwhelmed, and unable to "do it all," as O'Hare put it. Second, one principal struggled with the new position of authority, preferring her role as coach and friend, to supervisor and evaluator. In the case of McCloskey, at the end of her second year as principal, she made the decision to retire, a decision she made because she felt "vulnerable" as a site principal, and that she was not "tough enough" for what the job required. She expressed feeling powerless (despite bringing about a needed school change) against outside forces—an unsupportive district, and a community unwilling to support change—that contributed to her decision to quit.

Goldring and Greenfield's (2004) study on principals' many conflicting roles as creating *dilemmas* for principals contributed to this study's examination of teacher supervision and evaluation. They described the role of manager and the role of leader as a dilemma, due to the conflict between the two distinct and often dissonant roles. This dilemma suggests a primary tension between supervision (part of the leader role) and evaluation (part of the manager role). Another dilemma they identified concerns decision-making. The current study suggested the same conflict between the roles of supervision and evaluation. McCloskey discussed conflicting feelings between coaching teachers and having to evaluate them, preferring to be seen as a fellow teacher and their "friend" rather than having to be seen as the authority. O'Hare also perceived the two roles as conflicting, describing supervision, for example, as "old school style leadership," involving a checklist of expectations. However, she conceptualized the two roles as one primary role that involved "providing the pathway for a teacher to build capacity."

In DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran's (2003) study on principals' concerns and conditions, principals reported that managing stress was a major issue in their profession.

Peterson's (1985) conceptualization of the school as a *problem environment* highlighted how the needs of the school site imposed restrictions on the amount of time a principal can spend on leadership practices focused on teaching and learning. Tshannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) made the connection between leader self-efficacy and their ability to handle stress, in the form of problem solving:

> Confronted with problems, high efficacy principals do not interpret their inability to solve the problems immediately as failure…By contrast, low efficacy principals have been found to perceive an inability to control the environment and tend to be less likely to identify appropriate strategies or modify unsuccessful ones. (p. 574)

The principals in the current study viewed problems in different ways. O'Hare described her approach to a problem as less about the unsolvable aspect of a problem and more about "finding the system to fix it." Problem finding, as Peterson (1985) described it, is one lens through which to explore a leader's creativity. Both leaders engaged in problem finding that identified instructional shifts that needed to occur. O'Hare saw that her teachers were not engaging in analyzing data, and used her creativity to build a scaffolded entry point for teachers to collect and analyze data; McCloskey identified test-taking practice as an instructional practice that could be eliminated in order to make the time and energy needed to focus on science instruction.

A comparison of perceived leadership self-efficacy was examined in the context of the principals' perceived mental models and, more specifically, in the context of perceptions of effectiveness in their roles as teacher supervisor and evaluator. In discussing his theory of self-efficacy, Bandura (1977) described it as, "a conviction that

one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce given outcomes . . . the strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with given situations" (p. 3). Machida & Schaubroeck (2011) defined *leader self-efficacy* as "leaders' confidence in their abilities, knowledge, and skills in areas needed to lead others effectively" (p. 2). In the current study, levels of leaders' self-efficacy influenced a principal's ability to enact her mental models and, ultimately, created a roadblock to creating organizational improvement. It is interesting that inconsistencies in levels of leader self-efficacy further support the notion that the relationship between leader self-efficacy and mental models influences the enactment of organizational improvement. For instance, Principal McCloskey exhibited both a low and a high level of leader self-efficacy in her mental model *Principal as instructional coach*. She exhibited low self-efficacy in her ability to supervise and evaluate teachers, perceiving evaluation as "tricky" and "hard" because of "wanting to be everybody's friend," and a high level of self-efficacy when meeting with grade levels to discuss instruction.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

Implications for Practice

I will now discuss the relevance of this study in relation to the educational field and the role of the site-based principal.

This study's relevance in relation to the educational field and the role of site-based principals lies in two particular areas of concern: (a) the current call for reform of principal preparation programs to better equip prospective principals with the skills, knowledge, and self awareness they need to move schools toward organizational

improvement; and (b) the urgent need to retain new teachers as well as new principals, especially in high-poverty schools with ethnically diverse populations.

Many researchers suggest a strong relationship between organizational improvement and effective principal leadership. They argue that principal preparation programs are not preparing future leaders capable of balancing the demands of daily site management with the more important role of instructional leadership. They go further to suggest that the demands of the job have changed at a faster pace than the programs designed to prepare them (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Elmore, 2000; Levine, 2005; Peterson, 2002). Levine (2005) specifically criticized current leader preparation programs offered at universities. He called for a degree program in which

> the faculty would consist of academics and practitioners of high quality; the curriculum would blend the practical and theoretical, clinical experiences with classroom instruction; and teaching would make extensive use of active learning pedagogies such as mentoring, case studies, and simulations. (p. 66)

Other researchers are calling for an emphasis on preparing principals by focusing on the psychosocial aspects (e.g., the "people skills") of the principal position to prepare future leaders for the daily stresses and challenges. In discussing the implications of their study on principals' sense of self-efficacy, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) stated that "enhancing leadership self-efficacy should be an important objective for those responsible for improving leadership at schools," and discussed the need for "preparation and professional development of school principals to equip [principals] with the capabilities and a resilient sense of efficacy that will enable them to enhance both their

well being and accomplishments" (p. 583). Davis et al. (2005) suggested that preparation programs include activities that "simulate real-world problems and dilemmas . . . to improve problem-solving capacity, and help enhance candidates' self-concepts . . . and, ideally, practice the discipline of self-reflection" (pp. 10-11).

An area of particular scrutiny by researchers and policymakers is teacher supervision and evaluation. Researchers suggest that supervision should be "differentiated across the career continuum to support teacher growth and development" *(*Zepeda, 2006, p. 66)*,* which would require principals to possess deep knowledge and understanding of evaluating and supervising teachers in many different ways. Unfortunately, research points to supervision and evaluation as a major stressor for new principals. For example, one study on new principals (Walker, Anderson, Sackney, & Woolf, 2003) cited teachers' supervision as the area in which they felt most unprepared.

To further emphasize the importance of effective supervision and evaluation, researchers also linked ineffective supervision and evaluation to the chronic problem of teacher retention, suggesting that site leaders fail to connect teachers to the support systems (e.g., supervision and evaluation, professional development) in meaningful ways that translate to improvements in teaching and learning (Brown and Wynn, 2007; Davis et al., 2005; Zepeda, 2006). Teacher retention particularly impacts high-poverty schools where up to 20% of teachers in ethnically diverse schools with a high percentage of poverty have less than 5 years of experience (Zepeda, 2006). Conversely, principal retention was cited as another issue affecting organizational improvement, especially in schools with high percentages of English learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students (Miller, 2009).

The findings of this study suggest several steps district administration could take in improving principal evaluation and supervision as well as principal induction and retention. First, districts could consider creating a mentor program in which a veteran principal is paired with a novice principal to build a relationship to address new principals' feelings of stress and isolation, support principals in navigating the complex supervision and evaluation process, and to clarify priorities for effective use of time. Second, the district could implement a system of instructional rounds in which peer principal groups conduct group walkthroughs of their respective sites, to calibrate perceptions and expectations of best practices, provide different perspectives of leadership, and promote self-reflection on the level of organizational improvement occurring on the principal's own school site. Finally, district administrators in different leadership roles (e.g., human resources or curriculum and instruction) could conduct regularly scheduled visits to sites that allow for ample time to build positive relationships with principals, to observe classrooms and discuss observed practices, to offer support by listening and making suggestions, and to reinforce the district vision and expectations for organizational improvement.

Implications for Future Research

The current study was limited by the number of participants in the study as well as the fact that both principals were in their second year as principals. However, the questions guiding the current study could be applied to research on a larger scale, or extended and modified to examine other leadership positions and programs. I will discuss implications for future research through the lens of the questions that guided the current study.

The first question asked for new principals' views of instructional leadership, teacher evaluation and supervision, and organizational improvement. Although research has been inconclusive regarding the effects of supervision and evaluation, many researchers are looking at different models that would provide the time that the two principals in the current study expressed needing in order to effectively supervise and evaluate teachers. An in-depth examination of current supervision and evaluation models that use alternate leadership constructs such as distributed leadership (Spillane et al., 2004), differentiated evaluation models, and teacher self-evaluation models could provide insights into the changing landscape of leadership.

The second question explored perceived constraints and supports for new principals. Future research could focus on a comparison of district and school administrators' perceived district support for principals in their first 2 to 3 years of principalships to identify similarities and differences in perceptions of what is effective support. This, in turn, may inform district administration on best practices for retaining and growing effective principals. Another possible area of study emerged from the findings in the current study, in which the principals discussed difficulty in balancing the managerial and the instructional roles, and in prioritizing their daily practices around these roles. A suggestion for research could be to focus on what novice principals are actually spending their time doing on a day-to-day basis, to understand and improve daily practice.

The third question examined the similarities and differences across the two principals. Comparison studies of principals provide rich information on patterns of behavior, beliefs, and attitudes that influence principal effectiveness. A comparison of

veteran and novice principals, male and female principals, and principals of different ethnicities could shed light on the range of experiences between and within groups, and provide guidance to districts on how best to differentiate support for a diverse principal workforce.

The last question focused on to what extent new principals' mental models and leader self-efficacy influenced their ability to enact organizational improvement, as suggested in Kellar and Slayton's (2013) framework. I suggest more research following their framework—exploring the interaction between mental models, leader self-efficacy, immunities to change, and how they influence leader creativity to enact organizational change—coupled with a focus on levels of leader stress. In the current study, leader stress played a large role in both principals' ability—or perception of ability—to enact organizational improvement, and possibly led to the resignation of one of the two principals. A study using mixed methods, using interviews and a quantitative measure, such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory, may provide more clarity on how internal and external factors inhibit or encourage effectiveness.

Additionally, a rich context for research may be found in the examination of principal preparation programs, and the ways in which they choose participants and prioritize learning to prepare future leaders. One suggestion is a longitudinal study exploring participants' levels of leader self-efficacy and levels of stress related to the concept and reality of the principalship, from their time in a principal preparation program through their first 2 to 3 years as principals. Following the lead of Hess and Kelly (2007), this longitudinal study could compare preparation programs with different emphases, examine their course offerings and content, and measure over time, for

instance, a leader's perceived effectiveness, or attrition and retention rates of principals. An interesting focus of such research could be the long-term effects principal preparation programs that offered content such as Levine (2005) suggested, engaging prospective principals in simulations and role plays designed to explore psychosocial constructs of prospective principals, and comparing those to programs that focus on the managerial aspects of the principal's job.

Conclusions

If we are to believe that our work as researchers is valuable, then our work should be reflected in practice. Future research must attend to the traditional foci of leader instructional leadership and management, but also the more nascent areas of the psychosocial aspects of leadership (e.g., mental models and leader self-efficacy). Hopefully, this study has taken a step toward revealing some of the myriad factors confronting novice elementary principals as they take on managerial, leadership, and transformative change responsibilities.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol for Principal Participants

Background Information

1. Tell me about your career in education. Were you a teacher, assistant principal, principal? When, where, and for how long?
2. Why did you decide to become a principal? How long have you been a principal? How long have you been in your present role?
3. Did you feel prepared? Why or why not?
4. Please describe the strengths and challenges of this school as you see them.

Part II: Changing Roles, Supervision and Evaluation

5. Generally speaking, what do you see as the most important role of a principal? What are your priorities?
6. Tell me about the importance of the role of the instructional leader versus the managerial responsibilities of the principalship
7. How do you work with staff to address issues related to teaching and learning?
8. How prepared were you to supervise and evaluate teachers, specifically?
9. What has facilitated you in this supervision and evaluation role, and what have been the largest constraints?

Part III: Principal as Leader and Facilitator of Organizational Improvement

10. When faced with an issue or problem, what do you do to solve it?
11. Can you give me an example of how you've been able to enact your vision of leadership? Please include the community as well as the staff.
12. Can you tell me what you do to build and maintain organizational relationships with the faculty and community of your school?
13. Can you describe your expectations of your school to bring about organizational improvement?
14. How do you ensure this expectation is being carried out?
15. What has facilitated you in your role in creating organizational improvement, and what have been the largest constraints?

Part IV: Wrap Up

16. Overall, to what extent do you feel you are able to enact your vision of leadership?
17. Who do you look to as a means of support in helping you develop your capacity to lead?
18. Where have you grown the most in your role, and where do you feel you are most struggling?

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol for Teacher Participants

1. Briefly describe your involvement at this school site and the length of time you have been a member of the faculty here.

2. It is my understanding that 2 years ago the faculty experienced a great deal of change with the leadership. How did the faculty work to solve problems of practice during these changes?

3. What do you believe are the strengths of the faculty at this school?

4. To what extent do you find and take advantage of opportunities to lead at this school? Can you give me an example of a time where you "stepped up" in a leadership capacity?

5. In your opinion, how is teaching and learning supported at this school?

6. To your knowledge, what are the expectations at this school surrounding improvement? How are these expectations communicated?

7. In your opinion, what has your principal done in these past 12 weeks that you believe is impacting your professional practice the most?

8. How do you engage and advance your professional development?